

SOVIET LITERATURE

Monthly

ABOUT AND FOR LITTLE FOLK

This issue contains stories, fairy-tales and poems by well-known Soviet writers including Arkadi Gaidar, Nikolai Nosov, Valentin Katayev, Agnia Barto, Sergei Mikhalkov.

4 MOSCOW
1958

Журнал «СОВЕТСКАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА» № 4

На английском языке

SOVIET LITERATURE

Contents

PUBLISHED
BY THE UNION
OF SOVIET WRITERS

4

1958

EDITORIAL	3
<i>Anna ULYANOVA-YELIZAROVA</i> —Lenin's Childhood and Youth	5
<i>Nikolai NOSOV</i> —Romancers, Steps	15, 18
<i>Agnia BARTO</i> —Lyosha Dear, Lyosha Dear	20
<i>Anver BIKCHENTAYEV</i> —The Big Orchestra	21
<i>Yuri SOTNIK</i> —Trainers	56
<i>Alexei MARKOV</i> —The Hedgehog	70
<i>Ruvim FRYERMAN</i> —The Travellers Trudged out of the City	71
<i>Sergei MIKHALKOV</i> —Heigh-ho! Off We Go	76
<i>L. PANTELEYEV</i> —Word of Honour	78
<i>Yuri KORINETZ</i> —The Two Tubs.	85
<i>Susanna GEORGIEVSKAYA</i> —Granny's Sea	87
<i>Valentin KATAYEV</i> —The Magic Flower	133
<i>Vladimir ORLOV</i> —The Echo	140

PAGES FROM THE PAST

<i>Konstantin PAUSTOVSKY</i> —Memories of Gaidar	146
<i>Arkadi GAIDAR</i> —The Blue Cup	153

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

<i>Samuel MARSHAK</i> —"Enlightening" Books for Children	173
--	-----

PROFILES

<i>Korneli ZELINSKY</i> —Story-Teller, Critic and Scholar	178
<i>Boris GALANOV</i> —Samuel Marshak	182

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

<i>Lev KASSIL and Sergei MIKHALKOV—Our Friend,</i> <i>Gianni Rodari</i>	186
--	-----

WRITERS AND ARTISTS FORUM

<i>Evgeni RACHOV—The Art Work of Children . . .</i>	191
---	-----

REPORTAGE

<i>Konstantin VASILYEV—The Moscow Pioneer</i> <i>House</i>	195
---	-----

MISCELLANY

<i>Sergei BOGOMAZOV—Juvenile Radio Programmes .</i>	204
<i>Anatoli EFROS—Our Audiences</i>	213
<i>M. AMSHINSKY—Children's Books in the U.S.S.R.</i>	216

OUR CONTRIBUTORS	217
----------------------------	-----

PLATES

EDITORIAL

We have received many requests from readers for contemporary Soviet literature written about and for children. In response to these requests we are presenting this special children's number.

A vast and increasing number of children's books of all sorts are published in the Soviet Union. But they have one thing in common—the aim of inculcating in the child—and later in the young man or woman—humanistic feelings and the habits of friendship, of helping each other, of being inquisitive about life and fond of work; they try to give their readers an esprit de corps—what we call the collective spirit—a love for their native land and for its people, a sense of the international solidarity of interests that all countries and peoples have in the preservation of peace and the attainment of prosperity.

It goes without saying that considerations of space have prevented us from publishing the works of more than a small number of writers. Besides, we have to take into account that many works of Soviet children's literature are as a rule promptly translated and published abroad and thus become known to our readers that way. For those reasons we decided to publish mainly most recent works of Soviet juvenile writers. Finally, in order to acquaint our readers with as many authors as possible we decided not to publish longer works which had appeared here in book form.

The reminiscences of A. Ulyanova-Yelizarova which we present at the beginning of this number do not strictly belong to children's literature. But our children like to read books of this sort: as a boy Lenin was in the highest degree habitually bold, honest and straightforward, full of curiosity, with wide interests and a nature that was persevering, sincere and gay. That is something our young readers understand well; it arouses their sympathy and heightens their interest.

We feel that it will be also interesting for our readers to learn about the efforts made to encourage children's natural gifts, the Moscow children's theatre, the role of wireless and books in the life of children, and about the three most popular Soviet children's writers—Arkadi Gaidar, Kornei Chukovsky, and Samuel Marshak.

If needs be we may return to the questions touched upon here and offer our readers another children's number.

LENIN'S *Childhood and Youth*

On April 22nd, 1958, eighty eight years will have passed since the birth of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. In this issue we are publishing Lenin's elder sister's reminiscences of the years of his childhood and youth.

Anna Ilyinichna Ulyanova-Yelizarova (1864-1935) was a prominent member of the Communist Party which she joined on its foundation. She was an active participant in the preparations of the October Revolution and took part in the Revolution itself. From 1918 to 1921 she worked in the People's Commissariat of Education. In later years she collected and prepared for publication material concerning the history of the Party and the October Revolution. Among her books are: Alexander Ilyich Ulyanov and the Affair of March 1st, 1887; Reminiscences of Ilyich; The Childhood and School Years of Ilyich.

VLADIMIR ILYICH was born in Simbirsk on April 10th (old style), 1870. He was the third child in the family. A lively, vigorous, happy-natured little boy, he liked noisy games and was always on the go. He was a great breaker of toys. At about five he learned to read and, later on, took lessons from a local parish teacher who prepared him for the school (gymnasium) which he entered in the autumn of 1879 at the age of nine-and-a-half, joining the first form.

Study came easy to him. From the junior forms onwards he was always top of his class and regularly received the annual first prize. In those days these prizes consisted of books with an impress in gold on the cover bearing the words "For good behaviour and good marks," and a laudatory certificate. But Vladimir Ilyich owed his position as top boy not only to his splendid abilities; his serious and attentive attitude to work counted too. That was something our father instilled in him from

early years, as he did in Vladimir's elder brother and sister by supervising personally their studies in the junior forms. Another important factor in the formation of the boy's attitude was the example set by his father and mother, who were always busy working, and especially by his elder brother, Alexander or Sasha, as we called him. He had an unusually serious nature; he was a thoughtful boy with a very keen sense of responsibility. He was also distinguished by a character which though firm and resolute was in no way lacking in fairness, tact and gentleness. He was most popular with all of us younger children. Vladimir imitated him so much that we even made fun of him for it—whatever question we asked him he would always begin his reply with the words, "Sasha says. . . ." It is always important for a child to be set a good example by someone, and the example of a brother somewhat older than oneself is even more important than that of a grown-up.

The habit of approaching things seriously that Vladimir acquired enabled him to master his frolicsome and high-spirited nature and to take trouble with his lessons. This keen attentiveness, which was noted at the time by his teachers, combined with the boy's vigorous abilities enabled him to get a complete grasp of every new lesson in the class-room itself, practically without having to go over it again at home. I recollect how quickly he would finish his home-work when he was in the junior forms, and then start hopping about and turning somersaults to the distraction of us older children who were doing our lessons in the same room. Father would sometimes take him off into his study to find out whether he had done his home-work correctly and ask him to repeat some of the Latin words from his exercise books, but as a rule Vladimir knew everything. He was also a great reader in his childhood. Father used to receive all the latest children's books and magazines; and we had library subscriptions as well.

Vladimir's constant playmate was his sister Olga who was born on November 4th, 1871. A highly gifted, lively and bright little girl, she learned to read at the age of four together with her brother and, like him, took to her studies with facility and willingness. Besides, she resembled her brother Sasha in certain respects, being extraordinarily hard-working. I recall one occasion when Vladimir, then in one of the senior forms at school, said to me on hearing Olga practising assiduously on the piano in the next room: "How I envy her that capacity for work!" Aware of that capacity in Olga he set about cultivating his own industriousness which was to astonish us all so much in later years and which in combination with his splendid gifts helped him to achieve such brilliant results.

Vladimir Ilyich gladly shared his knowledge with his school-mates whom he helped through difficult lessons, problems, essays and translations from Greek and Latin. While in his last two years at school he took on, in addition to his own lessons, the tuition of the young Chuvash school-teacher Okhotnikov whom he coached for his university entrance examinations. He charged no fees for his lessons—the Chuvash had nothing to pay them with, anyhow. All the same, Vladimir taught him, though the youth had little ability. The Chuvash passed the exams and was able to take up his favourite subject mathematics at the university.

I had personal experience of Vladimir Ilyich as a teacher though he was more than five years my junior and was still a schoolboy at the time, while I was already in my last year but one at Higher Courses for Women. All the same, he helped me over one hurdle. In spring, 1886, I had to take examinations in several subjects, including three whole years of Latin. In those days Latin was a compulsory subject in the history and philology department. Classical education had the priority and Latin was taught in a very academic way; like most girls I had neglected it. Young people naturally longed to take up something more topical when they had finished school; to avoid studying Latin I had been willing to leave the Courses and take an extra-mural course in Moscow. But that was not to be and I had to apply myself seriously to Latin. I intended to swot at it during the winter holidays but nothing came of that plan either. And then after my father's death on January 12, 1886, I found all studies very hard and my Latin would not budge. It was then that Vladimir offered to help me, though just then he had a heavy schedule of studies in the last year but one at school and, besides that, was kept busy helping the Chuvash school-teacher. And yet, still not 16 years of age, Vladimir took on his new responsibilities with good grace and without much difficulty. More than that—after all, many a quixotic lad would take on something like that, only to drop it on meeting the first difficulty—more than that, he set about his work with me very seriously and patiently and would have kept it up had I not left for St. Petersburg in March. He ran the lessons so attentively and with so much lively interest in them that I soon became quite fond of that "horrid Latin." I had to study hard, to read and translate Julius Caesar, Cicero's *De senectute* and, above all, to learn and to be able to explain all the complicated rules of Latin grammar found in the text. Naturally, I felt somewhat embarrassed that I could not manage on my own and had to run for help to my younger brother, a mere schoolboy, whose own studies ran smoothly. There was undoubtedly a dose of false pride involved. But our lessons together went so swimmingly that the sense of strain vanished in no time. I remember Vladimir eagerly drawing my attention to the particular beauty and special features of Latin style. Of course, I knew the language too little to be able to appreciate it and our studies concentrated more on an explanation of the various grammatical forms peculiar to Latin, such as the supine, the gerund and the gerundive, and on verses composed to help students of Latin grammar, such as the following :

*Gutta cavat lapidem
Non vi sed saepe cadendo;
Sic homo fit doctus
Non vi sed multo studendo.*

I recollect expressing to Vladimir my doubts that the equivalent of the whole eight-year course could be covered in so short a period, but he assured me, saying: "You see, it's the absurdly planned curriculum of the schools that makes it necessary to spend eight years on Latin. A grown up, intelligent person can easily cover it all in two years," and to prove his point showed me how much he had

done with Okhotnikov in two years—successfully too, despite the fact that the Chuvash had less than average ability at studying languages. Our lessons went with a swing. Vladimir's approach was not that of a diligent student who had learned his lessons off by heart, but rather that of a young linguist able to unravel the peculiarities and beauty of a language.

As I shared that taste for languages with him I soon became a receptive pupil and made very good progress during those lessons, which were intermitted by Vladimir's happy laughter. In the spring I passed the examinations for the three-year period and a few years later was to find that my knowledge of basic Latin facilitated my study of Italian which gave me the possibility of earning a living and provided me with much satisfaction.

In 1886, when Vladimir was still not yet sixteen, his father Ilya Nikolayevich died and a year later the family suffered another grave misfortune. For his participation in the attempt on the life of Alexander III, Vladimir's elder and beloved brother Alexander was arrested, sentenced to death and, on May 8th, 1887, hanged. This tragedy made a very deep impression on Vladimir; it steeled his character and made him reflect more seriously on the course the revolution ought to take. In fact, Alexander Ilyich too had stood at the crossroads between the Narodnaya Volya society and the Marxists. He was acquainted with Karl Marx's *Kapital* and accepted the path of development it outlined. That is clear from the party programme he drew up.¹ He held study circles among the working class. But in those days the soil was not yet prepared for social democratic work. The working class was small and its members divided and backward; it was difficult for intellectuals to establish contact with them, and, what's more, the yoke of tsarist despotism was so heavy that people were flung into prison or banished to Siberia for the slightest attempt to establish contact with the working class. And not only with the working class: students had only to organize some entirely innocent reading circle as a means of meeting each other for the circle to be disbanded and the students sent back to their homes. Only those young people who thought exclusively of their careers or of a quiet life could remain indifferent to such a regime. An ever-increasing number of decent, sincere people joined the struggle, striving above all to shake, if only a little, the close walls of the autocracy, within which they were choking. Those who fought in the van lived under the menace of death in those days, but even death had no fears for those courageous souls. Alexander Ilyich belonged to them. Not only did he unhesitatingly leave the university and his beloved science (he could have been reading for a professorship) when he felt incapable of bearing any longer the tyranny that was oppressing his country, he just as unhesitatingly sacrificed his life. He accepted the risk of making bombs and, admitting that fact in court, thought only of how to save his comrades.

Alexander Ilyich died a hero's death and his blood was the glow of the revolutionary fire that lighted the way his brother Vladimir was to take.

¹ "Alexander Ilyich Ulyanov and the March 1st Affair." *Istpart*, 1927.

This tragedy occurred in Vladimir's last year at school. Despite the grave shock which he bore with great fortitude he, like his sister Olga, finished school that year with a gold medal.

Naturally, the clouds that had gathered over our family threatened all its members with misfortune, and we feared that the authorities would regard Alexander's younger brother with deep prejudice and perhaps hinder him from getting any university education at all.

At that time the headmaster of the Simbirsk school was Fyodor Kerensky who had a high regard for Vladimir Ilyich and had been on very good terms with his late father. He wanted to help his gifted young pupil to get round those obstacles. That explains the extremely reputable report on Vladimir which he sent to Kazan University and signed with other members of the teaching council. Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanov had been a very popular, much loved and respected personality in Simbirsk, and his family enjoyed the benefit of the esteem in which he had been held. Vladimir was the pride of the school. Kerensky's report was quite true in that respect. True too when it pointed out that his excellence at study was the result not only of his gifts but of the persevering and painstaking way he fulfilled his duties, a quality which originated in the intelligent sense of discipline instilled by his family upbringing.

Kerensky, deliberately, of course, made a point of emphasizing that religion was the foundation of that education, as also of referring to Vladimir Ilyich's "excessive reserve" and "unsociability."¹ In saying that "there had never been a single occasion when Ulyanov's words or acts could be considered reprehensible," Kerensky even sinned a little against the truth. Always bold and playful and quick to notice the comic side of people's characters, my brother often poked fun both at his school mates and at certain teachers. Once he chose as the target of his mockery a teacher of French called Port.

This Port was a fop of very limited intelligence who it was said had been a cook. He was a bit of a climber and had married the daughter of a Simbirsk landlord to get into "society." He was always hanging about the headmaster or the inspector; decent teachers despised him. Vladimir's cheekiness finally irked him so badly that he insisted on reducing his mark for behaviour that term.

As my brother was in the seventh form this was a rather serious matter. Father told me about it when I came home for the holidays in the winter of 1885, adding that Vladimir had given his word of honour that it would not occur again.

But did not little things like that sometimes lead to a disobedient youth being expelled from school and having all his life spoiled? Vladimir was spared that because of the high esteem in which his father and the rest of the family were held as well as because of his own exceptional talent.

The same reasons which prompted Kerensky to draw up for Vladimir the kind of report he did, made my mother decide not to let him live alone when he entered the university but to move to Kazan with the whole family.

¹ Vladimir had no close friends during his school years but, of course, he far from deserved the description of unsociability.

Late in August, 1887, she went to Kazan and rented an apartment in a house that belonged to a certain Rostova on Pervaya Gora. From there, a month later, Vladimir and the rest of the family moved to Novo-Kommissariatskaya Street, where they lodged at Solovyova's place.

In those days of stagnant calm when the Narodnaya Volya society movement had been crushed, and the Social-Democratic Party was as yet unborn in Russia and the masses still not engaged in the struggle, the only strata of society where discontent did not slumber and flashes of revolt were to be seen was among the students. There were always to be found honest ardent souls who openly expressed their indignation and attempted to struggle. For that reason the government brought its fist down the more heavily on the students. House searches, arrests, exile—all these forms of repression were inflicted on them. In 1887 the yoke became even harsher as a consequence of the attempt on the life of the tsar made in the spring of that year in St. Petersburg, in which almost all the participants were students.¹

Uniforms, inspectors, the most thorough system of supervision and espionage, the dismissal of the more liberal professors, the banning of all kinds of organizations, even such innocent ones as those consisting of students from the same part of the country, the expulsion and banishment of any students who had some way or another drawn attention to themselves—all these measures inflamed the passions of the students from their first months of that academic year.

The wave of so-called "disorders" swept through all the universities from November onwards. It reached Kazan too.

Students of Kazan University gathered on December 4th and, refusing to disperse, loudly demanded the presence of the inspector. When he appeared they made a number of demands, pertaining not only to student matters but to politics too. My brother told me about the incident at the time but I have forgotten the details. I remember only my mother telling me after she had tried to do something about the matter that the inspector had marked Vladimir down as one of the most active participants in the gathering; he had seen him in one of the front rows looking very excited and practically clenching his fists. Vladimir Ilyich was arrested in our flat on the night of December 4th. He spent several days at the police station with other arrested students—40 in all. They were all banished from Kazan. V. V. Adoratsky has passed on the account Vladimir gave him later of the conversation he had with the police officer who took him off to the police station.

"What are you rebelling against, young man? After all, you're up against a wall."

"It's a rotten wall. All it needs is a push and it will collapse," said Vladimir impulsively.

¹ The March 1, 1887 affair was investigated by a court of representatives of all estates. Of the 15 accused, 5 were sentenced to be hanged, among them A. I. Ulyanov, Vladimir Ilyich's elder brother; two received sentences of life imprisonment in the Shlisselburg fortress, and the rest were exiled in Siberia and on Sakhalin Isle for various periods.

The expulsion soon took effect. Vladimir Ilyich was banished to the village of Kokushkino, forty versts from Kazan, to the estate of his maternal grandfather Alexander Dmitrievich Blank where the writer of these lines was staying at that time under police surveillance. My five years' sentence to exile in Siberia had been commuted as the result of an appeal lodged by my mother. A fifth part of the estate belonged to my mother and in an out-building where one of my two aunts lived—a very cold uncomfortable place it was too—our family spent the winter of 1887-1888, my mother and the younger children moving there soon after Vladimir's arrival.

We had no neighbours. We spent the winter in complete solitude. Occasionally my cousin would drop in. And, of course, we had visits from the district police officer whose duty it was to see whether I was still there and make sure I was not propagandizing the peasants. But no one else came. Vladimir read a great deal—there was a cupboard, full of books belonging to my late uncle who had been well read; there were old copies of magazines with interesting articles: and besides, we subscribed to the Kazan library, and received newspapers. I recollect what an event in our lives it was when the courier arrived from town and how impatiently we opened the *peshcher* (a basket of local manufacture) which contained the books, newspapers and letters. And back that *peshcher* would go to Kazan full of books we had read and letters we had written. I remember one occasion in connection with that. One evening we sat over correspondence getting it ready for the basket which one of my aunt's servants had to take to town early the next morning.

I noticed that Vladimir who rarely wrote a letter was penning something long and seemed to be in a great state of excitement. The mail-basket had already been packed; Mother and the younger children had gone to bed but Vladimir and I sat up late as usual for a chat. I asked him whom he was writing to. He told me it was to one of his school friends who had gone to another university—one of the southern ones, I recall. Vladimir, of course, had described the student disorders at Kazan with great enthusiasm and asked his friend to tell him what had happened at his university.

I began to point out to my brother that there was no point in sending such a letter, that he was running a senseless risk of further repressions by doing so. But it was not easy to make him change his mind. In high spirits he paced the room and with obvious pleasure told me the caustic epithets which he had applied to the inspector and to other representatives of the high and mighty; he made fun of my anxieties and was reluctant to alter his plans. Then I reminded him of the danger he risked putting his comrade in by sending a letter of that sort to his private address. What if that other student had been one of those expelled or was under police surveillance? The letter might do him still more harm.

Vladimir took this into consideration and, agreeing fairly quickly to my last observation, went into the kitchen and with obvious regret removed the compromising letter from the basket.

Later, during the summer, I had the satisfaction of hearing from his lips during one of our talks with our cousin an admission, half-joking, half-serious,

that he was grateful to me for one piece of advice I had given him. That occurred after he had reread that letter and had decided to destroy it.

In addition to reading a lot Vladimir Ilyich occupied himself at Kokushkino by looking after our younger brother, hunting and, in winter, skiing. But that was his first attempt at handling a gun and he had little success throughout the winter¹. I think the reason was that unlike my two other brothers he was never a hunter at heart.

But life in the snow-bound house was, of course, very dull, and here his habit of concentrated study served him well. I recollect very vividly the sudden early spring which followed that lonely, burdensome winter, the first spring we spent in the village. I remember the long walks through the fields and the conversations I had with my brother to the accompaniment of the ceaseless trilling of larks far out of sight in the sky, the faint colouring of the tiny shoots and the white streaks of snow in the ravines. . . .

That summer our cousins visited us and Vladimir found hunting and walking companions and partners for games of chess. All the same, those were people without a social vein, not at all interesting for Vladimir as far as conversation went. Though older in years they were put into the shade by his pointed remarks and mischievous jokes.

In the spring of 1888 Vladimir Ilyich was permitted to move back to Kazan. Mother moved there with the younger members of the family. And a little later I was allowed to join them.

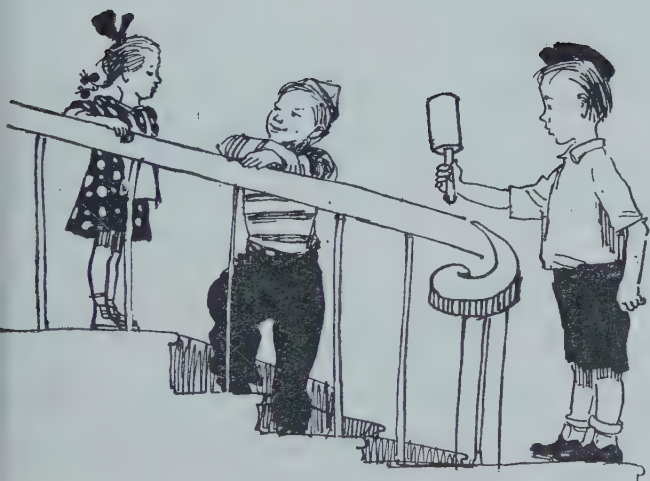
Translated by Ralph Parker

¹ I remember one of our jokes: once during the following summer on returning from a walk with his cousin Vladimir said: "A hare ran across our path just now." "Vladimir," I replied, "it must have been the one you tried to shoot all last winter!"



Maxim Gorky among children

Romancers



Mishutka and Stasik were sitting on a park bench talking. Only they weren't just talking, like other boys, but romancing, telling each other tall stories, as though to see who could outdo the other at it.

"How old are you?" asked Mishutka.

"Ninety-five. And you?"

"Oh, I'm 140. Once, you know, I was big as big, like Uncle Borya, but then I grew little."

"And I," countered Stasik, "was first little, then grew big, then got little again, and now I'll soon be big again."

"When I was big I could swim all the way across the river," announced Mishutka.

"Oh, that's nothing. I could swim the seal!"

"Huh, the sea! Why, I swam the ocean."

"And I used to be able to fly, too."

"Yes? Lemme see you."

"Oh, I can't now, I've forgotten how."

"Well, you know what happened to me?" asked Mishutka. "Once when I swam far out to sea a shark attacked me. I gave it an awful wallop but it only went snap, and bit off my head."

"You're lying!"

"No, honest."

"Then why didn't you die?"

"Why should I? I swam back to shore and went home."

"Without a head?"

"Of course. What did I want a head for?"

"But how could you walk without it?"

"Why not? You don't walk with your head!"

"Then how come you've got one now?"

"It's grown back again."

That was a real good one, Stasik thought enviously. Now, how could he think up a better one?

"Hm, that's nothing," he said. "Now me, I was in Africa once, and a crocodile swallowed me."

"What a whopper!" laughed Mishutka.

"No, no, it really happened."

"Then how come you're alive?"

"Why, it spit me out again."

Mishutka grew thoughtful. Now it was his turn to outdo Stasik. He thought and thought and at last began slowly:

"Once I was walking along the street. All around were tram-cars and autos and lorries. . . ."

"Oh, oh, I know that one," interrupted Stasik. "You're going to tell the one about getting run over by a tram. You've spun that one already."

"Nothing doing. This is a different one."

"Oh, all right. Fire ahead!"

"Well, there I was walking along, minding my own business. All of a sudden a bus came speeding down on me. I didn't notice it, took another step and. . . cr-rack. . . . I squashed it flat as a pancake."

"Ha, ha, ha! What a story!"

"It's not a story at all."

"No? You trying to tell me you really squashed a bus?"

"Why, it was a little one, a toy bus. A little boy was pulling it along on a string."

At this point Igor, their next-door neighbour, came over and joined them. He listened and listened to Mishutka and Stasik and then exclaimed:

"What lies you tell! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves."

"But we're not fooling anyone," Stasik objected. "We're just inventing, like telling fairy-tales."

"Fairy-tales!" snorted Igor. "Haven't you anything better to do?"

"You think making up stories is easy?"

"Course."

"All right, you make one up."

"Sure," agreed Igor, "nothing simpler."

Mishutka and Stasik looked at him in happy anticipation.

"Just a second," said Igor. "Er... er... hm."

"Well, go on, why don't you!"

"Wait a minute. Gimme a chance to think."

"Go ahead and think, think hard."

"Er... er," Igor mumbled again and stared up at the sky. "Just a second, just a second... er... er..."

"Well, why don't you think something up? You said it was easy."

"Yes, yes, hold your horses. Oh, I know! Once I was teasing a dog and it turned round and bit me in the leg. See, there's even a scar left."

"So what did you make up about it?" asked Stasik.

"Nothing. It happened just like I said."

"And you say you're good at inventing!"

"I am, but not like you. You tell a pack of fibs that don't do you any good. Now, I told one yesterday that had some sense."

"What sense?"

"Listen. Mama and Papa went out last night and left Ira and me at home alone. Ira went to bed, but I climbed up on the cupboard and stuffed myself on jam. Afterwards I thought I'd get it from Mama for sure, so I smeared some jam on Ira's lips. Then Mama came home. 'Who ate the jam?' 'Ira,' I said. Mama took a look and there it was all over her mouth. This morning Mama gave it to her good and proper, but I got more jam. See?"

"You mean your sister got into trouble on account of you and you're glad?!" exclaimed Mishutka.

"Well, and what's it to you?"

"It's nothing to me. Only you're a... a... what's it called?... a pre-varicator. There!"

"Pre-varicators yourselves!"

"Go 'way. We don't want to play with you."

"I wouldn't play with you anyway."

Igor got up and went away. Mishutka and Stasik started walking home. On the way they passed an ice-cream stand. They stopped, dug into their pockets and counted up their money. They had only enough between them for one portion.

"Let's buy one and share it," suggested Stasik.

They bought an Eskimo.

"We'll go home and cut it with a knife," said Mishutka, "so it'll be even."

"Come on."

In the hallway they met Ira. Her eyes were red. . . .

"You been bawling?" asked Mishutka.

"Mama wouldn't let me out."

"Why?"

"Because of the jam. But I didn't eat it. It's all Igor's doing. He must have eaten it himself and put the blame on me."

"Of course, he did. He was just now boasting about it. But don't you cry. Come with us and I'll give you my half of the Eskimo," offered Mishutka.

"And I'll give you mine, I'll only take one lick and give you the rest," promised Stasik.

"But don't you want it yourselves?"

"No, we've already had ten of them today," said Stasik.

"I know what, let's divide it in three," suggested Ira.

"That's right," agreed Stasik. "Anyhow, you might get a sore throat if you eat a whole one yourself."

They went home and divided the ice-cream into three parts.

"Mm, how good!" murmured Mishutka. "I love ice-cream. Once I ate a whole pailful."

"Oh, you and your stories!" laughed Ira. "As if anybody'll believe you ate a pailful of ice-cream!"

"Why, it was a very small one. You know, a paper one, no bigger than a cup."

Steps

One day Petya was coming home from kindergarten. He had just learned to count to ten. In the yard he found his little sister Valya waiting for him. "I know how to count!" Petya boasted. "I learned in the kindergarten. Watch me count the steps now."

They began to climb the stairs, with Petya counting loudly:

"One, two, three, four, five. . . ."

"Well," Valya prompted, "go on."

"Wait a minute, I've forgotten the next step. Just a second and I'll remember."

"Well, go on and remember," said Valya.

They stood and stood there on the fifth step.

"No, I'll never remember it this way. Let's begin all over again."

They went down to the bottom and started climbing again.

"One," counted Petya, "two, three, four, five. . . ."

And again he stopped.

"Forgot again?" asked Valya.

"Uh-huh. Funny, just now I knew it all and now I can't remember! Let's try again."

Again they went down and Petya began from the beginning.

"One, two, three, four, five. . . ."

"Twenty-five, maybe?" suggested Valya.

"No! Don't bother me! You keep me from thinking! See, on account of you I've forgotten. Now we'll have to start all over again."

"I don't want to start all over again," protested Valya. "Up and down, up and down. My legs ache already."

"If you don't want to, you don't have to. But I won't go on till I remember."

Valya left him and went home.

"Mama," she said, "Petya's downstairs counting the steps: one, two, three, four, five, and he can't remember the next."

"Next comes six," said Mama.

Valya ran out and saw Petya below still counting.

"One, two, three, four, five. . . ."

"Six," whispered Valya. "Six, six!"

"Six!" Petya cried in relief and went on: "seven, eight, nine, ten."

Luckily, there were only ten steps, or Petya never would have got home, because he had only learned to count to ten.

Translated by Asya Shoyett

Illustrated by Aminodav Kanevsky

Lyosha Dear, _____ _____ Lyosha Dear

"Lyosha dear, Lyosha dear,
Please, do me a favour, do:
Learn your lessons, Lyosha dear—
Do your tables—what's twice two?"

"Darling," mother begs, in tears,
"Learn your lessons, Lyosha."
Teachers, classmates, pioneers,
All fuss over Lyosha.

"Goodness gracious!" they all say,
"Why is his report so bad?—
P'raps because we didn't pay
More attention to the lad."
"Lyosha dear, Lyosha dear,
Do your lessons, don't say 'no.'"

Learn your grammar, Lyosha dear—
Conjugate the verb 'to go.'

"Ask me properly," says he,
"And show me how to do it.
"There's no bigger dunce than me,
"And it's time you knew it."

"Lyosha dear, Lyosha dear,
Please do me a favour, do. . . ."

Thus they coax that child at school,
At home, they sing his praise—
"Lyosha dear" becomes the rule,
And "Lyosha dear" he stays.

*Translated by Louis Zellikoff
Illustrated by Aminodav Kanevsky*



The Big ORCHESTRA

MOVING IN

No matter who moves into our house today I shall be the oldest inhabitant. Mother and I moved in here three weeks ago, long before anyone else, because my mother is going to work here as a janitress and I shall be the janitress' son.

I have never been a janitress' son before and I don't quite know how to behave.

Since there isn't a single boy and not even a girl yet in the whole yard I don't know what to do with myself. You can't very well play rounders or volleyball by yourself. So for want of anything better to do I wander around the yard measuring myself against everything I see. The wooden fence around the new garden comes up to my chest, the cement steps outside every entrance come up to my shoulders. The young poplar saplings that have been planted in the garden are about twice as tall as I am. And the thick iron chimney of the furnace room is taller still—you'd have to get twenty or thirty boys like me and stand them one on top of the other to reach up to it.

The day we arrived here, the superintendent of our house, Uncle Jafai, a tall man with whiskers, said to my mother:

"Now listen to me and remember what I tell you. As the janitress, you're the mistress of this place. I am in charge of all the houses belonging to our factory. But in this house you are the next in command after me. It's your job to keep things orderly and neat."

Now, then, I said to myself, if Mother is second then I ought to be third. And so I tried to act like the master of the house too, but my first attempt didn't come off as you will see.

That was when the commission from the City Soviet came to inspect the new house before the tenants moved in. The chief engineer showed them around, boasting all the time about how well the house was built. Having nothing else to do I followed them around.

The chief engineer walked ahead, explaining things, and the commission—two men with brief-cases and a woman with a notebook—walked behind. The woman kept scribbling in her notebook and seemed to be taking down every word the engineer said.

I brought up the rear, trying my best to look like the chief engineer—I stuck up my chin and stuck out my stomach and dug my hands deep into my trouser pockets, so that it must have looked as if one chief engineer was in front and another at the back.



When they came to the garage, the chief engineer stopped and said:

"This is the garage. Built with loving care, as you might say. More like a palace than a garage!"

The two men nodded and the woman began asking all sorts of questions, like "Could you please tell me the names of your best workers?"

The commission looked so pleased with everything they saw that I couldn't help butting in.

"If you look under the first window you will see a big crack!" I said.

They all bent down and saw the crack. But the chief engineer was very annoyed.

"What are you doing here!" he shouted. "Get out of here at once!"

Since nobody urged me to stay, I walked out of the garage. But if they hadn't driven me away I might have told them about the drains. . . .

That was five days ago and I have forgotten all about the snub. This morning I was roaming about the yard feeling fine when suddenly I heard my mother calling me.

"Run and fetch the new whiskbroom, son. Be quick, there's a good boy!"

I was half way across the yard before she had finished speaking.

"Not so fast, not so fast!" cried my mother. "You'll fall and hurt yourself. The tenants will begin arriving any minute now and I shan't have any time to bother with you."

I didn't need to be reminded that the tenants were coming. I was burning with impatience to see what sort of boys and girls would be moving to our house.

I do love to make friends!

I brought the broom and looked around to see what else I could do. Our yard is surrounded by brick and wooden buildings. There is no fence to climb over as there was in the old place. Half of the yard is occupied by a newly planted garden, a volleyball court, flower-beds and benches. To the right of the house are three new garages. At the back is a long shed divided into sections for each flat. There are eighteen flats in the house and a shop on the ground floor.

It suddenly occurred to me that while I still had the yard to myself I might as well take a ride. So I quickly mounted my good steed (the iron shovel) and set

off at a gallop past the garages and shed. Too bad I had forgotten my whip! I could have gone much faster.

The shovel scraped over the asphalt with a wonderful grinding noise, sending up a shower of sparks just like the sparks from a horse's hooves. I galloped up to Mother and stopped dead.

"Whoa!" I shouted. "Steady, old girl! You nearly ran Mother over. Whoa, I said!"

My mother was not very pleased with my game.

"You ought to be helping me tidy up instead of horsing around," she said.

"But there's nothing to do, Mother!" I protested. "Everything is as clean as the Dynamo skating rink in winter."

But there's no pleasing Ma.

"Clean!" she sniffed. "Your eyes are so dimmed with looking out for your new friends that you don't see anything. . . ."

I watched my mother out of the corner of my eye: what fault could she possibly find with the yard now? But she did find something! She picked up a cigarette end near one of the bushes and a tiny bit of paper behind the concrete steps.

Fortunately for me Uncle Jafai appeared at this moment. By now I had made friends with our house superintendent. I ran over to him, stood smartly at attention (he loves that sort of thing!) and said:

"Good morning, Uncle Jafai! Where are all the tenants? Has the moving been called off?"

"Greetings, Jack-in-the-box," he replied. "The moving will begin as per schedule."

He always calls me Jack-in-the-box for some reason though my name isn't so hard to remember.

"Anything I can do?" I asked him.

He scratched his beard and cocked one eye.

"Are all windows open?"

"Yes, Uncle Jafai."

"Are all the keys in the doors?"

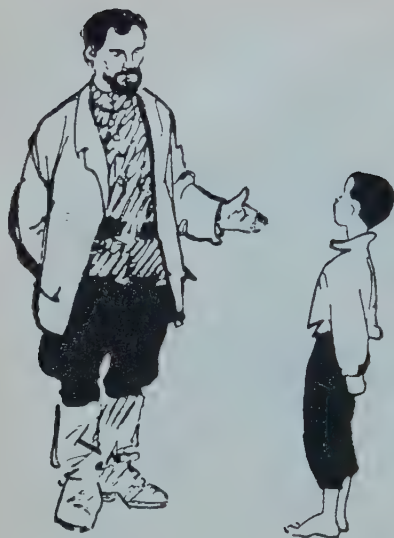
"Yes, Uncle Jafai."

"Do all the taps work?"

"But Uncle Jafai," I said in surprise. "We checked all that yesterday."

He stopped scratching his beard.





"Why, so we did," he said. "Look here.... Go and make sure that all the door bells are working. There'll be an awful fuss if some bell doesn't ring. Ah me, a house superintendent's life is not too sweet."

Now that was a job after my own heart. I dashed up the stairs two at a time, ringing all the bells on the way, even the bell of our own flat. I had a wonderful time.

"Everything is in order, Uncle Jafai!"

"What, back so soon!" he said in surprise.

"Well, while you were checking the bells I've been looking over the garden. I see we're short two benches. I don't know how I overlooked that. I suppose I'll have to go to the factory to get them. What time is it? Hey, where are you off to? This time I have my watch with me.... Ah, quarter past seven. I'll have to go away for an hour or two. I am leaving you here in charge."

"I don't mind," I said. "Only I don't know what to do."

"You must meet the new tenants, Jack-in-the-box."

"What am I supposed to do, Uncle Jafai?"

"Our house isn't a railway station," he said, scratching his beard again. "People are coming here not for a day but for a lifetime perhaps. That means this is an occasion they will want to remember. So be sure you give them a warm welcome."

"Very well, Uncle Jafai," I said.

But it was not until he had gone that I realized I had forgotten to ask him what he meant by a "warm welcome."

But I am not the one to worry. Besides, there was no time. The new tenants would begin arriving any minute now.

Fortunately I remembered the chief engineer who had built our house and something he had said to those commission members.

"Comrades," he had said, "building houses isn't so easy. At any rate it's much harder than inspecting them when they're finished."

By raising my chin, sticking out my stomach and thrusting my hands deep into my trouser pockets I was able to remember nearly everything the chief engineer had said. I decided that this would do the trick for a speech of welcome:

"Twenty years ago on the place where we now stand there were a few straggling one-story huts and small shops," he had said. "Later on they were torn down to make room for a large building. But when the foundation pit was dug water came pouring in from all sides and the building work had to be stopped."

Now I was off to a good start and from there I carried on in my own words.

"For several years nothing happened, and then a building engineer came along who wasn't afraid of subsoil waters. He said that concrete would stop the flow, and he designed a beautiful house with a concrete foundation but he never built that house because the war broke out and he went to the front and was killed."

What else should I tell them? I scratched my head. Ah yes!

"The house you are moving into today was built after the war ended. It was built by the factory which makes telephones."

But that is as far as I got.

"What are you up to now?" I heard my mother's voice. "You better go in and put the kettle on. Our tenants don't seem to be in any hurry to move in."

"I haven't any time for tea just now," I replied with dignity. "Uncle Jafai told me to meet the new tenants and I'm rehearsing my speech of welcome. Where was I? It was built. . . . There, I've lost my train of thought. . . ."

At that moment a lorry with a bison on the bonnet drove into the yard. The tenants were arriving.

THE ORCHESTRA

I don't know how people get acquainted. But with us it came about in a queer way. But let me tell you what happened.

When the lorry I told you about drove up to the house the first to get out was a little wizened old man in a broad-brimmed hat and spectacles. After him came a girl of about my own age. She pretended not to notice me, turned away and started fiddling with her hair ribbon. Then all of a sudden she began to hop.

Very well, I thought, let her hop. What can you expect of a girl!

While the old man and the driver were unloading furniture, she ran all over the yard, sat down on all the newly-painted benches, looked into the window of the shop and opened all the garage doors. Then she came back to the lorry and got out a skipping rope and began to skip. She was very good at it I must say.



Just then, luckily for me, I remembered I was the janitress' son and decided to go over and talk to her. I thought perhaps she was too shy to talk to me first.

"Is your father a professor?" I asked her. I thought that would do for a start.

"That's my grandfather and he's a retired book-keeper," she said with an important air.

I couldn't think of anything else to say after that. I was afraid she would laugh at me. You know what girls are like. Perhaps this was the time to deliver my speech of welcome? But before I had a chance to begin, the retired book-keeper came over.

"Still skipping?" he said to the girl with a smile. "Don't you want anything to eat?"

"No, Grandpa," she replied, throwing the rope from one hand to the other. "I'd much rather skip."

"Very well, do as you like," he said. "I'll bring your grandmother back on the next trip, and in the meantime, Masha, you had better go into the house and take care of the things."

From this conversation I learned that the girl's name was Masha, that besides a grandfather she had a grandmother. But what about her father and mother?

I was going to ask Masha herself, but she ran into the house and her grandfather got into the lorry and drove off.

Uncle Jafai had not come back yet. I began to get worried. People had begun to arrive and I hadn't made my speech yet.

Just then three lorries appeared. A very stout lady carrying a large mirror in one hand and a potted plant in the other was in charge of all three. While she went off to open the door of her flat, the four furniture-movers who had come with the lorries got together for a smoke. I thought perhaps I ought to make my speech to them, but I changed my mind—after all they wouldn't be living in our house. They would unload the lorries and go away.

"I say, are you a well-mannered boy?" a squeaky voice piped up behind me.

I turned round and saw a little girl with blue eyes. She was all dressed up and she was scraping the point of her shoe over the asphalt.

"Me?" I protested. "I'm the son of the janitress."

A well-mannered boy is one of those who says "excuse me," "beg your pardon" a hundred times a day, drinks boiled milk and washes in a bath-tub. I wouldn't be one of those for anything. I'd much rather bathe in the river than in a bath-tub. Besides, I don't want to be well-mannered.

"Oh dear," said the little girl. "My mama only lets me play with well-mannered children. But I don't care. My name is Lucia. What's yours?"

"Mansur," I told her.

In the meantime all sorts of ZIM and GAZ cars were driving up and soon the yard was as crowded as a market-place. The men hurried back and forth, carrying trunks and furniture into the house. It took two men to carry a wardrobe

and six to haul a piano. Of course the women fussed more than did anything else. Judging by the way they ordered everybody about, grumbled and shouted at the carriers or at their husbands you would think they were doing all the work.

Gradually the whole house filled up. The more energetic housewives soon had everything in order and leaned out of the windows to gossip with their neighbours. I did not have an opportunity to deliver my speech of welcome. But the worst thing was there were no boys among the newcomers. Were there only going to be girls in our house, I wondered. In that case I would have to go and live somewhere else.

I hung around every lorry trying not to miss a single one. Before an hour had passed I already knew something about the people who had moved in. Some had lived in Ufa all their lives, others had been evacuated from Leningrad during the war and stayed on, others had come from outlying villages.

At last a boy turned up. I had never seen anyone like him before. He had ginger hair, a snub nose and such a mass of freckles you could hardly see his face behind them! He had black eyes and very long arms, and he was so sunburnt you could have taken him for a Negro. He *was* a funny-looking chap!

"What're you staring at?" he said in a hoarse voice, looking me up and down.

"You're a queer 'un, aren't you?" I said, happy to have found a playmate at last.

To my surprise he got quite sore.

"Who's queer? Me, Akhmadei? Want a punch in the nose?" he shouted.

"No, thanks," I said quickly. "Why should I want a punch in the nose?"

"Just like that."

I took another look at his shining black eyes and his long arms and I quite believed he could punch a fellow's nose "just like that." He seemed about three years older than me so I didn't much care to start anything.

"You new here too?" he asked and pursing his lips he gave a sort of whistle. But whatever he did or said seemed very fine to me.

"No, I'm 'old," I replied.

"Old?" he said in surprise. "How's that?"

"I've lived here longer than anyone else."

"Go on!" he said. "I don't believe it."

"It's true."

"How about a punch in the nose? Now then, Akhmadei!"



I'd never heard anyone egging himself on before, and I began to be afraid that I was going to get it this time. And there's no knowing how our first encounter would have ended had Fatima not appeared at that moment. She came across the yard humming to herself.

"Hallo, Fatima," I said, glad of the opportunity to turn away from Akhmadei. "Are you going to live here too?"

Fatima and I were old friends. We had lived in the same factory hostel outside the town the year before.

She looked at Akhmadei but she didn't say anything to him.

Serves him right, I thought.

"Daddy was given a flat in reward for good work," she explained to me. "And since my mother is ill, we were given a flat on the ground floor on the sunny side. I knew you were here. Oh dear, I must hurry. Coming, Daddy!" she cried, noticing her father letting down the side of the lorry.

"May I help you?" I asked. It was a wonderful excuse to get a little farther away from Akhmadei's fists.

"No, thanks," she said, missing the point. "We have very few things. It won't take us long."

I resigned myself to my fate.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" Akhmadei's loud laughter sounded in my ears. "Told you off nicely, didn't she? No help wanted today, thank you!"

I didn't try to argue with him. It was beneath my dignity. He probably didn't know I was the janitress' son and that after Uncle Jafai and Mother I was the most important person here. But a chap like that wouldn't understand anyway.

To my great joy Uncle Jafai turned up at that very moment. I rushed to meet him.

"I don't know what to do," I complained. "I haven't managed to make my welcoming speech. Nobody has time to listen to me."

"Don't worry," he said, stroking my head. "You will have plenty of other opportunities to be nice to our tenants. Well, have you made friends with everybody? There's Volodya—his father's an engineer at our factory. Volodya, come here."

Volodya wasn't very tall but he squeezed my hand so hard I saw stars.

"Hey, look out!" I said wincing.

"Hurts?"

"No."

"Good for you," he said. "I squeeze pretty hard, I know. I'm hardening my fists."

Oh dear, I thought to myself. My new friends talk about nothing but fists. But this one looked quite grown-up, much older than Akhmadei.



I kept after Uncle Jafai but hard as I tried I couldn't get acquainted with everyone that day. All sorts of families had moved in under our green roof. You could hear many different languages in our yard—Bashkir, Russian, Tatar, Ukrainian, Chuvash.

A group of girls gathered on the volleyball field. Uncle Jafai and I went over to them.

"Well, well, I see we have a real big orchestra here," he said with a laugh.



"Why an orchestra?" Masha, the girl who had sat on all the benches, asked him.

"Yes, why an orchestra?" Lucia echoed.

We also wondered why Uncle Jafai had compared us to a big orchestra. After all none of us had shown what he could do yet. Perhaps none of us could even play the simplest instrument.

Uncle Jafai screwed up his eyes and scratched his head.

"Orchestras as you know consist of a great many different kinds of musical instruments. Well, you youngsters too are all different from one another."

I didn't mind being compared to a big orchestra at all, but perhaps if I had known how hard it was to be an "instrument," especially in a "big orchestra," I mightn't have been so light-hearted about it.

Uncle Jafai went away and before long more boys and girls appeared. True, they were mostly small fry, between four and six years old. But they made more noise than a brass band.

TRIAL OF STRENGTH

"Now's the time to show who's the boss around here," I said to myself.

I might as well begin with the little girls. They had all made friends already and were chattering away as if they had known one another all their lives. They didn't pay the slightest attention to me although I was standing right beside them.

They certainly don't waste time, I thought to myself with envy.

They were playing volleyball. I was too shy to join them and it wasn't much fun watching them.

"Hey, you there!" I shouted moving closer. "Be careful with that ball. See it doesn't hit the trees. They've just been planted."

"Who do you think you are, giving orders?" a girl with a long plait said scornfully.

"I'm the janitress' son," I replied as sternly as I could. "Trees must be taken care of."

"Mansur, stop interfering!" cried Lucia gaily. "Go and play with the boys and leave us alone."

"Yes, run along," said Fatima.

I didn't want to argue with her and so I went over to the shed from where boys' voices could be heard. But I called back over my shoulder:

"Well, you be careful, or there'll be trouble."

A game was in progress behind the shed. I could never have believed two boys could make so much noise. It was Akhmadei and Iskander, Fatima's brother, tossing coins. They were so busy playing they didn't even look up when I joined them.

"Heads or tails?"

"Heads!" shouted Akhmadei.

With mouths open they watched the coin spinning in the air and as soon as it fell on the ground they rushed to it, each one trying to snatch it up first.

"It's tails!" squealed Iskander joyfully.

"You didn't spin it right," cried Akhmadei. "It ought to have been heads!"

When he saw me Iskander brightened:

"Here's Mansur, let him be umpire. He doesn't play but he likes to watch."

"All right, let him be judge," growled Akhmadei. "Now, watch me win!"

Iskander laid the coin on his thumb again.

"Heads or tails?"

"Heads!"

The coin fell right at my feet. I bent down and announced in a solemn voice: "Tails! Iskander wins. If you don't believe me you can look yourself."

"What're you so pleased about? You'd better look out!" Akhmadei warned me.

"I believe in playing fair and square," I said with dignity.

"Heads or tails?" Iskander said quickly.

"Heads!" repeated Akhmadei.

The coin flashed in the air and hit the ground with a loud clink.

"Tails, it's tails again!" I cried in glee.

Akhmadei seized me by the ears.

"Want to see the Urals?" he said behind my back.

"Aha," I answered, suspecting nothing.

The next minute Akhmadei was lifting me up by the ears.

I let out a terrific yell. It hurt right down to the soles of my feet.

"Well, how did you like the Urals?"

"Go to hell," I said holding back my tears with difficulty.

"Want to see some more?" Akhmadei asked.

Iskander got angry.

"You quit that," he said, getting between me and Akhmadei.

"So you're on his side, eh!" cried Akhmadei, turning on Iskander in fury.

Iskander fell back a step.

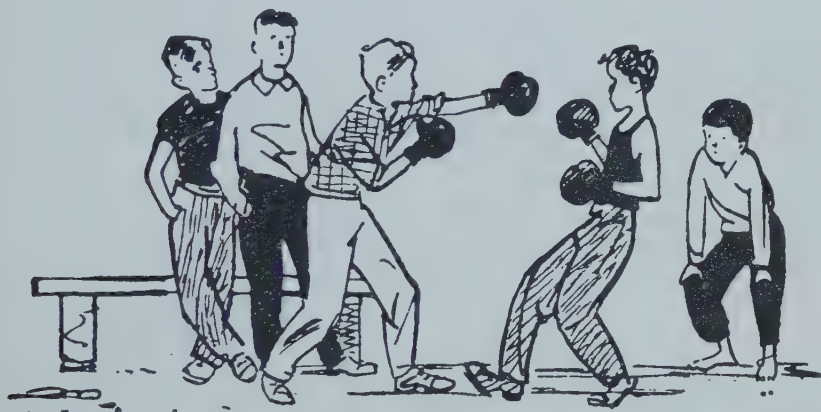
"I mustn't fight," he said. "I play the violin and I'm not supposed to fight. You see, my fingers. . . ."

Akhmadei was somewhat taken aback by this and he stood still with his fist upraised. Volodya's arrival at that moment saved us from certain disaster.

He was not alone. With him was a pock-marked boy a little smaller than Akhmadei but bigger than me. Volodya carried a pair of boxing gloves in each hand, real boxing gloves of shiny leather.

"Meet my chum," he said, nodding towards the boy. "He's come to our house-warming."

Akhmadei reluctantly lowered his fist.



"I've brought boxing gloves," said Volodya. "Let's have a boxing match for the championship of our house."

"Not a bad idea," said Akhmadei. "Only I can punch quite well without gloves."

Volodya paid no attention to that remark.

"We'll begin with the feather-weights," he said, turning to me and his visitor. "Come on, put on the gloves."

Before I had time to protest, Akhmadei was pulling the gloves on my hands while Volodya did the same for his friend. I had never even seen a pair of boxing gloves before, but I didn't care to admit it.

"Go!"

The other boys thought it a wonderful lark, but we two were dead serious about it.

My opponent wasn't much of a boxer either but he kept aiming at my nose. Now, my mother likes to kiss me on the nose and of course she'd be bound to notice if something wasn't quite right with it. So I protected my nose as best I could. But when the boys saw me backing away they all began yelling:

"Hey, where you running to?"

"Keep in the centre!"

"Give it to 'im!"

Encouraged by the onlookers, I stopped backing away and gave the pock-marked boy a hefty punch right in the chest. But I forgot to cover myself properly and my opponent took the opportunity to give me such a whack on the jaw that I saw stars.

"Hey, I've had enough!" I said pulling off the gloves. "You can do your own boxing!"

Volodya lifted the boy's right hand and announced:

"The feather-weight champion!"

So that is how I came second in the feather-weight match.

Between you and me, I got the worst of that bout because the gloves were too big for me. I couldn't swing my arms properly.

After that the pock-marked boy fought with Iskander, and Iskander with Akhmadei. Akhmadei won of course. He beat Iskander good and proper.

"Gloves or no gloves, it's all the same to me," declared Akhmadei with a satisfied grin, wiping his sweating forehead. "Who's next? I'll take anyone on!"

Volodya stepped forward.

"Okay, let's have a try," he said, slapping his gloves.

After the first two or three blows everyone could see that Volodya was a real boxer. He seemed to be teasing Akhmadei: he'd give him a punch and step back. Akhmadei would lunge forward and come right smack against Volodya's glove. The more punches he got the angrier he became. Volodya seemed in no hurry. In fact, watching from the sidelines, he seemed to be hitting back too slowly, but there must have been a lot of force behind his punches because Akhmadei barely kept on his feet each time. It was quite clear that Volodya was both stronger and more skilful. His last punch was so powerful that Akhmadei went down like a sack of flour. Volodya was unanimously acclaimed the champion of the Big Orchestra. He was very pleased and told us that he was from Leningrad where some of the world's best boxers came from.

The only one who didn't share our enthusiasm was Akhmadei.

"All right, you wait!" he growled, sitting on the ground and pulling off his gloves. "Anyone can box with these here things. Give me a good fist fight any time."

Everyone could see that Akhmadei didn't consider himself beaten by any means. What a brave fellow! I thought admiringly. And so proud!

After a while Akhmadei went away. I went after him. Of course it would have been wiser to have stayed with the others and listened to Volodya's stories about famous boxers, but I couldn't help it. I was dying to see what this proud, strong fellow would do now.

Akhmadei walked along, spitting as he went. Seeing an empty box on the path he kicked it viciously aside. Then he saw the girls playing volleyball on the sport ground.

The next minute he was on the field and had grabbed the ball away from them. If you ask me he was just looking for a fight to work off some of his anger. The girls, of course, rushed up to take the ball away. Lucia seized him by

the sleeve, thinking that he would try and run away with the ball. But he pushed her roughly aside. At that moment Fatima came dashing up.

"Give back that ball at once!" she said with a frown.

Akhmadei turned on her in a fury. "Who's giving orders around here?" he shouted. "Take that!" And he gave her a punch on the shoulder. "Listen here, you," he said, scowling at the girls. "You do what I tell you from now on, see? Or you'd better look out."

Strictly speaking I ought not to have allowed Akhmadei to hit the girls. By rights I should have interfered and stopped him. But I didn't dare. He looked so big and strong. I could only gape at him in wonder.

Most of the girls seemed to be impressed by him too. Lucia for one started to cry, much louder than necessary if you ask me, and ran home to complain to her mother. But Fatima didn't shed a single tear, although everyone saw how hard Akhmadei had hit her. He stood waiting for her to start crying too, but she didn't.

"If you ever dare to touch me again," she said proudly, putting on her sun-hat, "I warn you, I'll . . ." she stopped and took a deep breath.

"Tell your big brother on me, eh?" Akhmadei sneered. "Or Volodya perhaps?"

"No," she said.

"Then what will you do?"

"I'll hit you myself."

"All right, go ahead and do it now," scoffed Akhmadei and stepped towards her. But Fatima stood her ground, she didn't flinch, she only narrowed her eyes a little. To my surprise Akhmadei didn't hit her. Evidently he thought better of it.

The other girls must have been surprised to see that Fatima wasn't afraid of Akhmadei. But I was not surprised because, you see, I knew Fatima. She wasn't the scarey kind, as you will agree when I tell you the story of how she got toys for her New Year's fir-tree and textbooks for the neighbour's boy.

FATIMA

The fir-tree incident happened when we were still living in the old house long before Fatima began going to school.

She was only five years old at the time. Although she was quite small she had been to several fir-tree parties and had danced around a fir-tree and had been given presents by Father Frost. But this time she wanted to have her own fir-tree and Father Frost at home. But her daddy didn't want to bother with it.

"You only need to buy the tree," said Fatima, "Aunt Emma has promised to give me the toys to hang on it. She's too old for New Year trees now."

Her daddy finally gave in and bought a nice green tree at the market. The next day Fatima went out in the morning and didn't come home for such a long

time that everyone began to get worried. She turned up at last around dinner-time with a big box of lovely shiny decorations.

Her mother wanted to scold her for being out so long, but her daddy said: "Let us find out first where she has been. We can scold her afterward."

But before Fatima could explain Aunt Emma arrived and she told the whole story.

"I was receiving patients at the clinic as usual this morning," she said, "when who should come into my office but Fatima. 'What's the matter?' I asked her. 'Are you ill?' She shook her head. 'No,' she said. 'I've come for the fir-tree decorations.' 'But my dear Fatima,' I told her, 'I don't keep them in the clinic, you know. They are at home.' 'I was there too,' she said, 'but you had already gone. So I came here. I wanted to come right in but the people in the waiting room wouldn't let me, they told me to wait my turn. So I waited.'" Aunt Emma laughed. "She had to wait a long time because there was a roomful of patients, but she didn't go away. So I took her home with me and chose the nicest toys I could find."

When he heard the story, Fatima's daddy said: "Well, I don't think we shall scold Fatima this time. It's a good thing to be persistent."

The other time Fatima showed her character was when a neighbour sent her to the school to buy textbooks for her boy who was ill in bed.

Fatima was seven at the time. Her mother and father were very friendly with the neighbours and Fatima was always ready to run errands for them.

She liked this errand particularly because she was curious to see what a boys' school looked like inside. When she got there she wandered about the corridors of the big building, went up and down the stairs until at last she found the stall on the second floor where the textbooks were being sold. She took a place at the end of a queue of boys and amused herself while waiting by looking at the portraits of famous men hanging on the walls.

But when her turn came the woman behind the counter refused to sell her any textbooks.

"This is a boys' school," the woman said. "You girls have your own school, and you can buy the books there."

Fatima told the woman that the books were not for her but for the neighbour's son who was ill.

"You see he went bathing in the river and his insides got all inflamed," she explained.

But the woman wouldn't listen.

"Please don't waste my time, little girl," said the woman. "Now, boys, who's next?"

Of course the boys were only too glad to push Fatima out of the queue. Poor Fatima felt so bad she wanted to sit down on the floor and howl. It was so unfair! But she forced back her tears and made up her mind not to leave the place until she got those books. There must be at least one person in this school who would give her a fair deal, she told herself.

So she wandered down the corridors listening at every door until she came to a tall white door with blue glass handles. She could hear the sound of men's voices inside. She knocked at the door. The voices stopped and someone called:

"Come in!"

She opened the door and walked in. Two men were sitting on the couch—one had a beard and the other wore a military tunic but without any insignia. The one with the beard said:

"Come in, little girl. What can I do for you?"

Fatima stepped forward, took a deep breath and said:

"I came to your school to do a good deed but they won't let me!"

The man with the beard smiled and peered closer at her.

"Suppose you tell us exactly what happened, so that we can judge," he said. "Don't be shy, sit down here and tell us all about it."

Fatima seated herself comfortably on the couch and told them all about the neighbour, her sick son, the nasty woman who refused to listen to her explanation and how the boys had pushed her out of the queue. The bearded man said nothing. The other man in the military tunic without insignia kept saying: "Good. Good."

When Fatima said: "I wanted to get his textbooks for him," the man said, "Good." When Fatima said: "He bathed too much and caught cold," the man again said: "Good." It was very funny.

When she had finished her story the man with the beard frowned.

"Yes, little girl, you have been badly treated," he said. "I shall write a note and you will get the books without any difficulty."

"Here you are!" said Fatima when she delivered the books to the neighbour. "I got them without any difficulty."

She said that not because she wanted to tell a fib but because she liked the sound of the words "any difficulty."

The neighbour wanted to give her a rouble for ice-cream but though she loved ice-cream Fatima had the strength of will to refuse it: her mother never allowed her to take money from strangers.

I have told you these two cases so you will understand why Fatima wasn't afraid even of a fellow like Akhmadei.

THE NEW BOY

Ever since the time Akhmadei had "shown me the Urals" I tried not to boast too much in his presence about being the janitress' son, i.e., an important personage in the house. And would you believe it, I found that with a little tact you could get along with him quite well. And since most of the other boys in the house were small fry, I spent most of my time with Akhmadei.

Volodya and Iskander broke away from us from the very beginning. Volodya spent all his spare time at the boxing club, and Iskander was always running off to the Young Mechanics' centre and was learning music and drawing besides.

I had never played war games until I met Akhmadei. But now we played at war every day.

Our battle-field was the open space behind the woodsheds. We set up our tanks and guns behind an escarpment of sand with planks of wood for fortress walls. Our soldiers lay on either side of "no man's land." They were sturdy little soldiers made of clay dried for three days in the sun.

For ammunition we used pebbles picked up on the shore of the Belaya River. We made special expeditions to the river to fetch them and always had a plentiful supply.

When everything was ready we would go to our command posts.

"Comrade General, are you ready?" Akhmadei would call from his side.

"Ready, Comrade General!" I would reply.

"I shall attack, Comrade General!" declared Akhmadei and opened fire, raising a terrific barrage that lasted for a long time, at any rate much longer than had been agreed on.

"General Akhmadei, it's my turn now," I would remind him.

"General Mansur, be quiet. I haven't used up all my shells yet."

"General Akhmadei, I'm not going to play," I would insist. "I want to do some firing myself. . . ."

But Akhmadei would not listen to me.

"Aha, there goes your tank! Direct hit. Take it away. You hear me? General Mansur, are you deaf, or what?"

"General Akhmadei, you've done enough softening up," I would declare.

"Target number five. Shrapnel, fire!"

But Akhmadei didn't like that.

"General Mansur, stop firing, or I'll punch your nose."

I must say Akhmadei never liked to admit defeat. If his "troops" were defeated he would at once attack the "commander" of the enemy army with his fists. Knowing that weakness of his I did not insist on winning too often.

One day as we were playing our favourite war game a new boy appeared. He had fair hair and looked so clean and shiny he seemed to have just come out of the bath-tub. Neither of us had ever seen him before and we couldn't imagine where he had come from.

He stood with his hands in his trouser pockets watching us, but said nothing. He didn't even ask to join in the game. He just stood with his lips pursed and though he didn't say a word you could tell that he didn't think much of us.

Akhmadei pretended not to notice him. I tried to do the same.

"Elevation five!" shouted Akhmadei. "Target infantry, shrapnel! Grazing fire! Target number seven. Another volley! General Mansur, your army is in flight!"

Just at that moment, when the battle was at its height, the new boy snickered.



"Some game!" he said in a tone of contempt. "And your commands are all cock-eyed."

Akhmadei sprang up in an instant. I believe he had just been waiting for this pretext.

"Want a punch on the nose?" he said menacingly. "Now then, about face and clear out while the going's good!"

The new boy didn't even take his hands out of his pockets. He examined Akhmadei with interest.

"You ought to know the difference between the commands in the Civil War and the last war," he remarked casually. "Or during the Battle of Borodino. Perhaps you've forgotten?"

Of course Akhmadei could not forgive an insult like that. He closed in on the new boy. To my surprise the other didn't budge. The two of them stood so close to each other their noses were almost touching! Akhmadei's eyes were flashing. The tip of his nose turned as white as the knobs on the doors of the chemist shops here in Ufa. The new boy stopped smiling finally, but he didn't take his hands out of his pockets.

"I suppose you don't know who I am!" shouted Akhmadei, stepping on his enemy's toes.

"Unfortunately I have not the honour of your acquaintance," replied the new boy—he talked the way they do in old books.

Akhmadei caught the sneer in his voice.

"See this?" he said, showing his fist.

"I suppose so."

"Well, what're you waiting for then?"

"Nothing. I'm in no hurry."

"It's time you got to hell out of here!"

"Where's that?"

"Look out, or you'll be sorry."

"I don't think you'd dare."

"What if I do?"

"You might get something you didn't bargain for."

"Huh! Hear that?" Akhmadei turned to me.

"He's got some cheek. . . ."

I was dancing with excitement.

Now they stood so close their foreheads were nearly touching.

"I'll crack you one!"

"No you won't!"

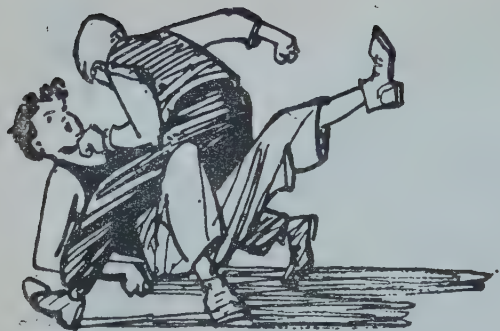
"You'll see!"

"Rats!"

"You watch out!"

"I'm watching!"





"I'll give you such a beating your own mother won't recognize you. That'll teach you."

"I wish you would stop making these terrible threats!" the boy said loftily.

I couldn't understand what Akhmadei was waiting for, why he didn't give the beggar a good hiding and be done with it.

"Maybe you think your mama or your papa will stop me? Well, you're mistaken. I'll knock the stuffings out of

you and be up the fire-escape and on the roof before anyone can come near me."

"Aw, you talk too much," taunted the new boy.

Akhmadei let out a roar and the next minute the two of them were rolling on the ground, puffing and panting and swinging about with their fists. Pretty soon my friend Akhmadei was on top. He sat on his opponent's chest, but he couldn't hit him properly because the new boy had both his hands caught fast.

"Well, had enough?" asked Akhmadei, still panting.

"How about yourself?"

"I haven't started yet. Wait till I get really sore."

"I'm waiting."

The truce was over. They went rolling again. Of course our battle-field suffered the most—our escarpments were flattened out, all our soldiers were buried under the sand and our materiel was all mixed up.

"Take that!" shouted Akhmadei, hitting his enemy. "And that! And that!"

The new boy was getting the worst of it now.

"I see you don't know anything about jiu-jitsu," he gasped when Akhmadei who was sitting on his chest, paused to catch his breath.

He is tough! I thought to myself.

"What do I need your jitsa for. . . ."

"Jiu-jitsu I said. Shall I show you?"

"Go ahead."

"Let my hand go."

Akhmadei did, and that was his mistake. The new boy's fist went smack against Akhmadei's chin. Another moment and Akhmadei was underneath. But my friend Akhmadei didn't give up so easily. He struggled wildly, trying to throw off his adversary. The new boy, seeing he could not hold Akhmadei down much longer, gave him a punch, then sprang up quickly and ran off. In a flash Akhmadei was up and after him. Another minute and they had both disappeared inside the house.

By the time I reached the entrance, Akhmadei was coming out, brushing the dust off his trousers.

"I caught him at his door," he panted triumphantly. "He lives in No 8. If his mother hadn't come out I would've given it to him all right!"

RECONCILIATION

Of late my mother has begun to treat me with great respect. "You're a man now," she keeps telling me and I must admit I am always very pleased when my mother treats me like a grown-up. Any boy would.

Every morning I get up early with my mother—grown up men don't lie around in bed—and go outside to help her clean up. She sweeps the yard and I wash it with the hose. The powerful jet washes the dust off the front entrance and makes the wide pavement shine. Sometimes I even manage to turn the hose on the big shop windows and the sign over the door. But that is when nobody is looking.

One morning as I was busy with the hose I heard a voice behind me say:

"Hey, let me have the hose for a minute!"

I turned round and who do you think it was? The new boy. He looked as clean and tidy as usual and I was dying to ask him whether he got washed in the bath-tub every morning, but I wouldn't lower myself to speak to him.

"Give me the hose for a minute," he repeated.

"No!"

After I had seen him run away from Akhmadei I wasn't afraid of him any more. Anyone who flees the battle-field is a coward, and there was nothing to be afraid of.

"Oh, come on, be a sport."

"Keep away or I'll yell," I growled.

"What's the matter with you?"

"I'll call Akhmadei and he'll teach you to leave other fellows alone."

The new boy laughed: "I'm not afraid of your Akhmadei!"

"You were afraid all right last time!"

"Rubbish. I didn't want to muss up my clothes, that's all."

"Well, you can't have the hose anyway," I declared firmly.

He pulled a coin out of his pocket and showed it to me:

"If you let me hold the hose for a bit I'll show you a coin, a real gold one. Dutch."

I got sore.

"You can't bribe me!" I declared proudly. "You've come to the wrong place."

The new boy stopped trying to persuade me and went over to my mother.

"Good morning," he said, touching his cap. "The whole house is still asleep. You're the only one up and about. Do you always get up so early? Please let me help you."

"No, thanks," said my mother. "You mustn't dirty your nice suit."

"Oh, I do want to help you," said the new boy in a honeyed voice. "Perhaps I could hold the hose for a while. That would be a help too, wouldn't it?"

That's how the sly fox got around my mother.

"Sonny," she called to me. "Let the boy have the hose! He wants to help with the watering."

Of course I couldn't disobey my mother. But you can imagine how I felt. This chap has got to be taught a lesson, I said to myself. But how? I gave him the hose and ran off to wake Akhmadei.

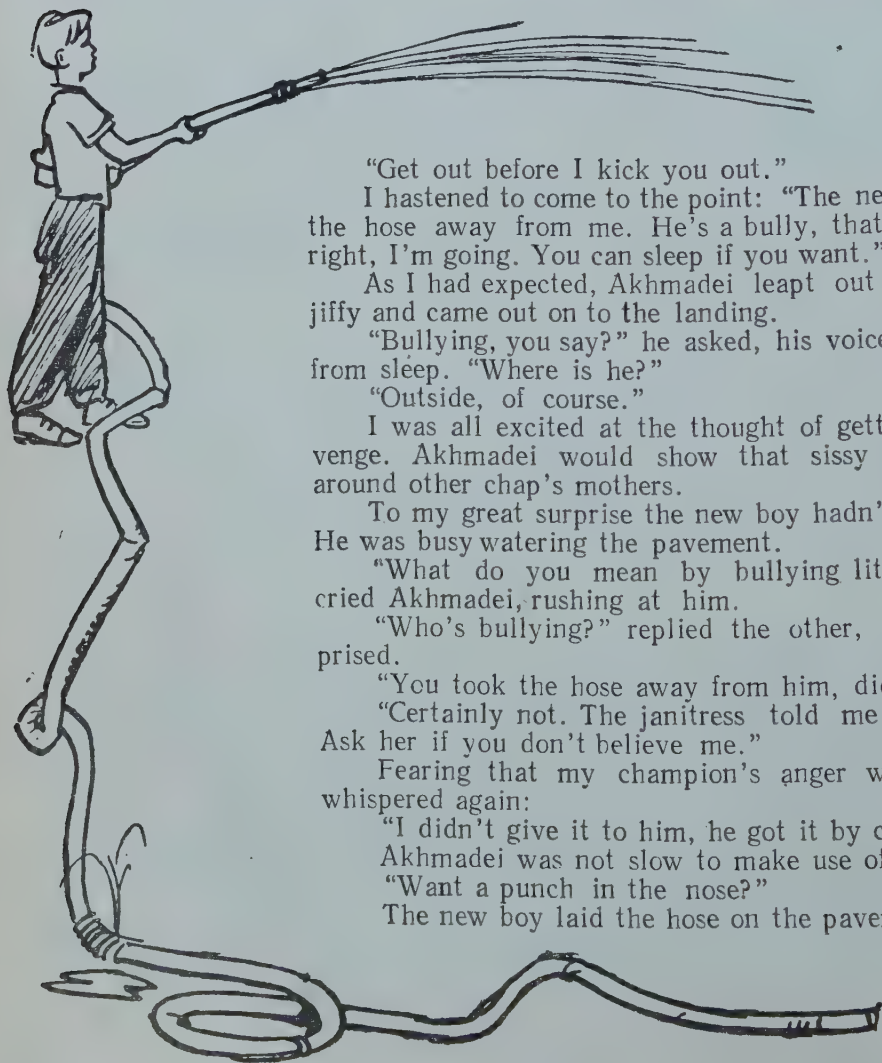
"Listen, Akhmadei, come out here for a minute," I whispered, opening his door a crack. "Get up quick."

"Go away," he growled, pulling the blanket over his head. "Can't you see I'm sleeping."

"This is important," I urged.

"Go away."

"I thought you'd help me," I went on.



"Get out before I kick you out."

I hastened to come to the point: "The new boy took the hose away from me. He's a bully, that's what. All right, I'm going. You can sleep if you want."

As I had expected, Akhmadei leapt out of bed in a jiffy and came out on to the landing.

"Bullying, you say?" he asked, his voice still hoarse from sleep. "Where is he?"

"Outside, of course."

I was all excited at the thought of getting my revenge. Akhmadei would show that sissy how to get around other chap's mothers.

To my great surprise the new boy hadn't run away. He was busy watering the pavement.

"What do you mean by bullying little fellows?" cried Akhmadei, rushing at him.

"Who's bullying?" replied the other, looking surprised.

"You took the hose away from him, didn't you."

"Certainly not. The janitress told me to take it. Ask her if you don't believe me."

Fearing that my champion's anger would cool, I whispered again:

"I didn't give it to him, he got it by cunning."

Akhmadei was not slow to make use of this pretext:

"Want a punch in the nose?"

The new boy laid the hose on the pavement.

"I don't know what you're making such a fuss about. Take your old hose."

"Ha, he said he wasn't afraid of Akhmadei," I sneered, still hoping my friend would avenge my honour.

Akhmadei began to roll up his sleeves. In another moment he would say: "At him, Akhmadei," and rush at his adversary.

But the new boy suddenly burst out laughing.

"What's the joke?" asked Akhmadei taken aback.

The new boy went up close to him, glanced mysteriously over his shoulder and said in a low voice:

"I don't like the way you fellows play here. It's nothing but fighting and



scrapping. I wanted to propose a much more interesting game, but I can see you're not the right kind."

Akhmadei looked at the new boy with distrust.

"What're you jabbering about?"

"Want to know?"

"All right, go ahead."

"For instance, we could start a treasure hunt," the new boy proposed. "I can see you fellows have never heard of treasure hunts."

"Trying to fool us again?" Akhmadei said looking fierce.

But the other boy didn't pay any attention.

"It's easy to see you don't read much," he went on. "I've read heaps of books about treasure hunts. Ever heard of a book called *Moonlight and Redbeard*? Or *The Stranger Knocks at Day-break*? Ever heard how Big Muhharam found the diamonds?"

In my heart of hearts I knew I had never read any books about treasure hunts. Akhmadei said nothing, but I am sure he hadn't heard of such books either. The new boy was quick to take advantage of our ignorance.

"I don't know whether to let you in on the secret or not," he said thoughtfully.



But I was terribly interested in the treasure.

"Where are you going to hunt for treasure?" I asked him.

"Here in the yard."

"In this yard?"

"Of course."

"You're joking," Akhmadei moved closer to the new boy.

"I swear! In the old days there were merchants' houses here. And merchants always buried their gold and diamonds under their houses or in the foundation. I know. . . ."

"Can you show us where the merchants' houses used to stand?"

"Of course I can."

He led us into the back of the yard, but when we came to the shed he stopped.

"No, we can't start the search now," he said, and he seemed to be considering something. "No, it's impossible."

"Why?" I whispered, sensing some mystery.

"The only way to hunt for treasure is at night by the light of the moon."

"You're trying to wriggle out of it," said Akhmadei suspiciously.

"Cross my heart, hope I should die," swore the new boy.

Akhmadei looked at him with something like respect.

"That's pretty good. Where did you learn that stuff?"

"From reading books."

I saw that the new boy was winning Akhmadei over.

"About the treasure too?"

"Yes."

"So we'll have to dig at night?"

The new boy nodded. "We'll have to have a plan too. Nobody hunts for treasure without a plan."

"Where will we get a plan?"

"I'll draw it myself. I know all about such things. It's in the books too. I have already jotted something down."

"All right, you get busy with the plan," Akhmadei said. "By the way, what's your name?"

"Yasha. You can call me Black Cape, too, if you like."

Akhmadei who had never had such a grand name seemed a little envious.

"Black Cape, nothing," he said curtly. "Yasha, will do."

Fearing that another quarrel might break out and spoil our treasure hunt I hurriedly changed the subject.

"So we'll have to wait until the moon is up?"

"That's right," said Yasha. "And this must be a dead secret between ourselves. Understand?"

"We understand," Akhmadei assured him. "But don't you try any treasure hunting without us, see? And you, Mansur, see you hold your tongue. You're liable to blab to the girls."

That is how we came to make friends with Yasha. After having agreed to begin our treasure hunt on the first moonlight night, we parted.

WHAT THE MOON DID

No one who has never had a secret can understand how hard it is to keep it. I was simply aching to tell the girls about our treasure hunt. Sometimes I wanted so badly to share that secret with someone I nearly blurted it out to the trees, the pail, the pot or even the radio set. But I had to control myself. After all a secret is a secret.

And as luck would have it the moon refused to appear. Night after night the sky was black as pitch. How long can a fellow go round with a secret burning inside of him? It was positively bursting out of me, and I felt I simply couldn't hold it in much longer.

Nature was against me, and at last my moral strength gave out. One day I said to myself: "If that moon doesn't come out within the next three nights I'll tell the whole thing to Fatima. And why not, after all? Why should we boys be the only ones to hunt for treasure? Wouldn't Fatima like to find some treasure? I'm sure she would. She needs some money. Her father doesn't earn very much and her mother has been ill for a long time.

The weather was cloudy all the three days. And on the fourth morning, true to my word, I went out into the yard fully determined to let Fatima in on our secret. Bad luck dogged me from the start. Fatima was at home and didn't come outside for a long time. Lucia, Maya and Zuleika, the girl with the long plaits, were standing on a box with their noses pressed to Fatima's window-pane. I went over to them and stood behind them.

The sun was very warm although it was already the beginning of August. The girls were trying to persuade Fatima to come out and play. But she wouldn't come.

"She'll come as soon as she's cleared the table, you'll see," said Lucia.

Fatima cleared the table and began peeling potatoes.

"I want some potatoes too," said Masha. "Do you like fried potatoes, girls?"

Masha was the smallest of the girls and she was always asking questions. She often asked me questions too and I always liked answering her. Sometimes I even played girl's games with her.

"Now she's filled the pail with warm water. Is she going to wash the floor?" cried Lucia.

"I also wash floors," said Zuleika.

In the meantime Fatima had washed the floor.

"Now, she'll be coming out," sighed Lucia.

But Fatima washed herself, tidied her hair and began preparing the dinner. The girls wanted her to come out and play with them. They tapped on the window, and made all sorts of signs to her. But she didn't hear them.

"I'm tired of standing here," said Lucia angrily at last. "She doesn't care anything about us."

"Her mother is ill," said Masha.

"I'm going to knock once more and that's all."

Lucia began to bang on the window. Fatima wrote something on a slip of paper and showed it to the girls.

"I'll come out soon. I have something to tell you."

The girls jumped for joy but I moved away. It doesn't do for boys to jump about like goats. I decided to wait for Fatima anyway and tell her the secret. I didn't care what happened.

A CONFESSION

I called softly to Fatima as soon as she came out.

"I want to speak to you," I said. I was simply bursting with that secret. She looked at me as if she had never seen me before.

"What do you want?" she burst out. "Are you against me too?"

She turned and ran home, leaving me gaping with surprise. What had I said to offend her? I couldn't make it out.

I went over to her windows. I simply had to get this off my chest. Climbing on to the empty apple crate under the window I looked inside. Fatima was sitting with her back to me, crying. I could see her shoulders shaking. I was just going to tap on the window when I heard Masha calling me.

"Are you sorry for her too?" she asked.

I nearly fell off the box with surprise.

"Of course I am," I said when I had recovered.

"But it isn't nice to peep into other people's windows."

I felt myself turning red.

"I wasn't peeping, I was just going to . . ."

Masha beckoned to me: "Come with me," she said.

I followed her through the garden, past the woodsheds to the farthest corner of the yard. There she stopped and turning to me said in a low voice:

"Fatima is crying because she loves someone. But you mustn't tell anybody."

"All right, I won't tell anybody," I promised. "But what's she in love for?"

It was Masha's turn to look surprised.

"Every girl loves some boy," she explained. "I love somebody too. You, for instance."

I got very red in the face. I didn't know what to say. I didn't know whether to be pleased or angry.

"You can't help it, I suppose," I said, feeling sorry for her.

"No, it's my fate," she said with a sigh.

I had never loved anyone yet so I did not quite know what I was supposed to do.

"How am I to love you?" I asked her.



She brightened up at once.

"To love means to be very great friends. Understand?" she whispered. "You and me will be real true comrades for life."

"All right," I said, a little uncertainly.

Masha seized my hand.

"You are stupid," she said indignantly. "You must whisper, not shout. I've heard the big girls talking about love. You don't know anything."

Masha was a good girl, and I didn't object to being friends with her.

"You must always stick up for me and you must fight anyone who tries to hurt me, and you must think of me all the time."

I had no objections to sticking up for her but as for thinking of her all the time I couldn't promise that. I had other people to think about besides her—first of all my mother, and then Akhmadei with whom I was getting chummier all the time. When I remembered all this I decided to be honest with Masha from the start.

"I don't mind loving you," I told her. "But I'm afraid I shan't be able to think of you all the time. You see, I have other people to think of."

I was going to turn away when she stopped me.

"That's not all," she said, looking a little shy.

"What else?"

"You must prove that you love me."

"How?" I asked.

"Grown-up girls get presents and things. You can bring me something too."

"But I haven't any money to buy presents with," I told her.

"You could buy me an ice-cream cone anyway," she suggested. "Or pick some flowers for me."

I was very relieved to hear that was all she wanted.

"As soon as we find the treasure I'll buy you fifty roubles worth of ice-cream," I promised grandly.

Masha clapped her hands.

"Oo, that's lovely! Are you going to hunt for treasure? How wonderful!"

I saw that I had let the cat out of the bag, but it was too late. So I told her all about it but made her swear not to tell a soul.

And that was the first secret I betrayed in my life and all because of a girl.

QUARREL OVER TREASURE

The weather continued cloudy and Akhmadei was seriously thinking of giving Yasha a good thrashing when luckily the sky cleared.

"Tonight we'll start our treasure hunt for sure," Yasha told us. "The plan is ready. Do you want to see it now or would you rather wait until we are ready to dig?"

"I've waited long enough," said Akhmadei scowling. "It's high time we started. I'm tired of being led by the nose."

Yasha didn't want any trouble at this stage.

"I'm ready," he said. "Now where shall we meet? Nobody must see us. This is a big secret, you know."

"There's an empty woodshed at the end of the yard. We'll take it over," said Akhmadei.

It was an ordinary woodshed with an earthen floor and no windows and an empty wooden box in one corner.

"It will do," said Yasha, examining the walls with a critical eye.

I saw that Akhmadei was almost dancing with impatience.

Yasha pulled a notebook from inside his blouse, opened it carefully and smoothed out the pages one by one. Akhmadei and I stared open-mouthed at a page with a drawing on it—an oak-tree with a thick trunk, a rock, a lake and a big cross. In one corner of the plan he had drawn a golden coin. Over it hung a bird with outspread wings—and eagle most likely.

"Can't make anything out in all this mess," growled Akhmadei. "What's the oak-tree for? There aren't any oak-trees here. They're all limes. And that rock. . . . Where did you see that?"

But Yasha was not abashed.

"You don't understand," he said, "That's how it's supposed to be. There's always a lake and a rock on all treasure hunt plans. Most of them have gorges and valleys too. I tried to draw a valley but it didn't come out. So I drew an oak-tree instead."

Akhmadei seemed satisfied with that explanation.

"Carry on," he said.

"Now we must get hold of some spades, a crow-bar and an axe"

"What do we need an axe for?" I asked in surprise.

The others looked at me in scorn.

"It's easy to see you never hunted for treasure," Yasha remarked. "An axe will come in handy. Maybe we'll need to cut a clearing or build a bridge."

"What do we need a bridge for when we're going to look for treasure in our own yard?"

Yasha blinked, he wasn't prepared for that question. Akhmadei came to his aid.

"Suppose we meet some wild beasts. We'll have to defend ourselves, won't we?" he said.

I didn't believe him of course, but I thought it wiser not to argue the point.

"All right, I'll get a spade, and a crow-bar and an axe. My mother has them all. Now what will we do with the treasure when we find it?" I asked, remembering the promise I had given Masha and wanting to have everything clear from the start.

Yasha burst out laughing.

"We've got to find it first, you chump! When we do, we can hide it again or go off on some journey."

But this time Akhmadei banged his fist on the box.

"Bury it! You just try!" he roared. "Who said you could run things around here? Here's what we'll do. We turn in the treasure to the jewellery store and buy a sanatorium pass with the money."

"What's the idea? Want to go to a health resort, eh?" Yasha's eyes were wide with amazement.

"No, not me," Akhmadei said reluctantly. "It's for Fatima's mother. She's very ill, you know. And they haven't much money. They can't send her to a health resort every year. So I propose. . . ."

"Nothing doing," cried Yasha. "I shan't give up my share."

"Yes, you will!"

"No, I won't!"

"Won't you!" Akhmadei began rolling up his sleeves.

When he saw that Yasha yielded. "All right, have it your own way. I give up my share of the treasure."

"That's better," said Akhmadei. "And now when do we start? I'm ready to go right now."

"No, we can't go now. You know treasure is always hunted by moonlight. I suggest promptly at midnight," whispered Yasha.

"Good. Midnight it is," Akhmadei agreed, also in a whisper. "We meet here in the shed."

That business about the sanatorium pass for Fatima's mother puzzled me. Why, Akhmadei and Fatima were not even on speaking terms! They were always quarrelling. It was all very queer.

ACCIDENT

On the stroke of midnight we three stole out of the house with our tools and made for the far corner of the yard where the wooden house had once stood. We had just located the exact place to begin digging when suddenly we heard Masha's voice.

"You've come to look for treasure?"

We nearly fell over with surprise.

"How did she find out?" Akhmadei demanded with a suspicious look in my direction.

I kept quiet, cursing myself up and down. To make matters worse, Masha was not alone. Fatima and her brother Iskander were with her!

"I know you are going to look for treasure," Iskander began politely. "Please let us join you. I can't do any digging myself. I have to take care of my hands. I play the violin, you know. . . ."

"But I'm not afraid of dirtying my hands," Fatima interrupted him.

"You can forget it," Yasha said brusquely. "Women don't hunt for treasure. If you don't believe me you can look in the books."

But Fatima wasn't the kind to be put off so easily.

"That was all right in the olden times," she said. "But now men and women are equal."

"You shut up, Yasha," said Akhmadei unexpectedly coming to Fatima's assistance. "Let her hunt for treasure too. Why shouldn't she?"

"Of course, there'll be enough for everyone," I added.

Yasha was left in the minority and so he had to give in.

We boys with the exception of Iskander took turns with the crow-bar and the spade. We soon had quite a deep hole dug, but there was no sign of any treasure. Nothing except a lot of broken glass and brick.

"Why are we digging in this spot?" Fatima suddenly asked. "Perhaps it isn't here at all."

I too was doubtful. Really, why had we begun digging in this particular corner of the yard and not near the garages for instance. There had been a shop there once, I was told.

At that moment Yasha bent down suddenly over the hole, stuck in his hand and pulled out a coin. We were all amazed.

It seemed to me I had seen that coin somewhere before. Wasn't it the one Yasha had shown me when he wanted to get the hose away from me? I stepped forward.

"Let me have a look at it!" I demanded.

Yasha's face fell. I think he saw I was going to expose him so he said in a loud voice:

"I am going to make a present of this coin to Mansur! Let him have the first coin of our treasure!"

"Hooray, Yasha found a coin!" cried Masha, clapping her hands. "And he's given it to Mansur!"

"Show me that coin!" demanded Akhmadei, his eyes flashing.

I showed it to him. Fatima also looked at it, even tried to bite it.

"It's a Dutch coin," she said. "See it says: 'Nederland.' And on the other side 'I gulden.'"

But Akhmadei cut her short.

"Maybe it isn't golden at all," he said.

"I didn't say it was," retorted Fatima. "I said gulden, not golden. You ought to listen properly."

Akhmadei got on his high horse at once:

"I know the difference between gulden and golden without being told."

I saw that trouble was brewing so I said quickly:

"What are you quarrelling about? One coin isn't a treasure,"

I was torn between the desire to expose Yasha and the pleasure of being the proud possessor of a rare coin.

"You don't understand, Mansur," intervened Iskander. "This coin tells us a lot. I have heard that whole fortunes have been found buried in the cellars of old houses. Who knows, perhaps there are all sorts of precious jewels and things hidden around here."

We all got very excited when we heard that.

"Give me the crow-bar!" said Fatima. "I want to dig too."

"I won't," said Akhmadei stubbornly.

"Give it to me, I tell you!"

"No, I won't."

Before anyone had time to interfere Fatima had seized one end of the crow-bar and tried to pull it away from Akhmadei. I don't know what happened after that—whether Akhmadei let go suddenly or whether it slipped out of his hand. At any rate Fatima suddenly cried out and dropped down on to the ground, holding her foot. Blood oozed through her stocking.

Something had to be done quickly. Masha whose grandparents always slept very soundly ran home and brought back some bandage and eau-de-cologne. She washed the wound and we helped her bandage it up. I was afraid that Fatima would cry, but she didn't.

"Does it hurt very bad?" I asked her.

She nodded.

"Akhmadei didn't do it on purpose," I said.

She didn't answer.

"Look here, Fatima," said Akhmadei. "You don't think I tried to hurt you, I hope."

But she didn't say anything.

"If my folks hear about it I'll get hell," said Akhmadei miserably.

I felt sorry for him.

"You can't let a comrade down," Yasha intervened. "Much worse things than this happen on treasure hunts."

I saw how upset everybody looked but I couldn't think of anything comforting to say. Knowing what a kind heart Fatima had I appealed to her again.

"You won't give Akhmadei away, will you?" I said. "You can't let a friend down. Tell your mother you did it yourself. Or say some strange boys in the street chased you and you fell or something. What does it matter?"

Fatima shook her head: "I can't tell lies."

Fortunately her brother intervened: "Don't worry, Fatima will never give anybody away, I can vouch for her. If nobody else says anything she won't."

"Each for all, and all for each," declared Yasha solemnly.

"Right you are," I said very pleased.

We put off the treasure hunt for another time. It was very late, and we all had to get home without being seen.



Two or three days after our unsuccessful treasure hunt I was standing on a chair in front of the chest of drawers examining myself in the mirror when my mother came into the room.

"Goodness gracious!" she exclaimed. "What's this? My son Mansur all dressed up and looking at himself in the mirror! Wonders will never cease!"

I shrugged my shoulders and said nothing.

"I must say you do look nice," she went on. "I only wish you would always be as neat and tidy as this."

I had never seen my mother so pleased with me. And all because I had combed my hair and put on my new shirt and my new boots. Such a fuss about nothing!

"Anyone would think I never combed my hair," I said. "Don't you know it's August 7 already. School will be starting in a few days and I haven't tried on my new boots and my new shirt yet."

To tell the truth school had nothing to do with it. I had dressed up today because I was going to visit Fatima. My mother must have suspected something too, because she smiled her knowing smile and, kissing me on the nose, sent me out to play.

Outside I felt that something had changed. I couldn't tell what it was at first. Everything seemed to be as before—the trees, the little garden, the parallel bars, the garages—yet they all looked somehow different. And then I realized what it was—summer was ending. The wind rustled the fallen leaves on the paths. It seemed to be playing with them—picking them up, swirling them around and dropping them again.

Our lime-trees looked thin and bare without their leaves. Soon the rains would start and make slanting lines on our window-panes like the lines in our exercise books. My heart ached to think that summer was over already.

At that moment I heard Uncle Jafai's jolly voice.

"Hullo there, Jack-in-the-box, where are you off to?"

"Good morning, Uncle Jafai," I said, giving him my hand. "You're just the man I wanted to see."

"At your service, boy," he said, with a smile, squeezing my hand in his great big paw.

"You were wounded in the war, weren't you, Uncle Jafai?"

"Yes, boy, twice. Why do you ask?"

"Well, you see, Fatima has been wounded too, and I am going to pay her a visit. The trouble is I don't know how to amuse sick people. Perhaps you can tell me?"

Uncle Jafai screwed up his eyes as he always does.

"Oh, so you're going to visit her. Good for you, Jack-in-the-box. I think she will be very pleased to see you. Sick people like visitors because it shows

their friends do not forget them. You go and sit beside her and tell her all the news about the Big Orchestra."

I thanked him and said good-bye. But I didn't go straight to Fatima's place. I hung about the yard for a while in the hope that some of the neighbours would come out and see me in my new shirt and shiny new boots.

But I had no luck. The yard was empty. I was just about to ring Fatima's doorbell when I heard a familiar whistle and Akhmadei came around the corner.

"Heh, Mansur, come here quick!"

I sauntered over as slowly as I could so Akhmadei could admire my appearance. He had never seen me so neat and tidy before and there was no knowing when he would have another chance. Let him see that Yasha wasn't the only one who could look nice. Not that I wanted to be taken for a sissy; but I did want to make an impression.

My friend, however, noticed nothing. He was clenching and unclenching his fists and muttering.

"One on the nose! One in the eye!"

"What for?" I cried, halting in my tracks.

"For fooling us about the treasure, that's what!"

"But it wasn't me, it was Yasha!" I protested.

"Who said it was you?" growled Akhmadei. "I've been waiting for that Yasha all morning but he hasn't come out yet. Just you wait, you . . ."

I agreed that Yasha ought, of course, to be taught a lesson. He hadn't said anything about the treasure since that night and every time we mentioned it he burst out laughing.

On the other hand, I didn't think much of Akhmadei's idea either. What was the use of having another fist fight? I agree with Uncle Jafai—that's no way to teach anyone anything.

"He ought to be punished, but not that way," I said, still keeping at a safe distance from my wrathful friend.

"Oh, you don't agree, eh?"

"No."

"You're sticking up for him?"

"I'm not sticking up for anybody," I said. "I only say he ought to be taught a lesson he'll remember."

Akhmadei snorted—he doesn't like to be contradicted.

"Any ideas?" he demanded.



"None, so far"

"Then keep quiet. You're a softie. A good thrashing is what he needs."

My friend folded his hands behind his back and began pacing up and down, just like the retired general who lives on the ground floor of our house. He is a nice old chap and quite friendly too—he often stops to chat with us when he passes through the yard.

Suddenly I had a brainwave.

"I say, suppose we put him on trial?" I suggested.

"Who?"

"Yasha, of course. We can try him for fooling his comrades and for telling lies."

Akhmadei thought this over.

"I bet there isn't any such law," he said.

"We can invent one."

"Wait. We can find out about the law. Lucia's father is a lawyer. They ought to have some law books in their house."

"I'll find the law, don't worry," I assured him. "I'll be the public prosecutor."

Akhmadei didn't think much of that suggestion.

"No, you couldn't be a prosecutor! A prosecutor has to have a loud authoritative voice and strong fists besides."

I didn't see why a prosecutor needed strong fists, but it was no use arguing with Akhmadei, so I said:

"All right, then I'll be the judge."

"No," said Akhmadei hastily. "I'll judge him myself. I'm the injured party."

"What about me?" I protested. "Didn't he take the hose away from me on false pretences?"

My friend scowled.

"All right then, you can be witness, if you like. Or an assessor. A people's assessor. That's a pretty important job in a court."

I had to agree. After all, I thought, a people's assessor is better than nothing, and with Akhmadei you had to take what you got.

THE TRIAL

Trials are a troublesome business as we soon found out. It might have been simpler if we had had any experience, but neither Akhmadei nor I had ever been in court. To begin with we had a lot of trouble trying to find a law to fit Yasha's crime.

Lucia brought out three thick law books from her father's library, but not one of them had anything in it about fooling your playmates. The law-makers slipped up on that one!

Of course if Yasha had been with us he would have thought of something. But he didn't show up. Besides, since he was to be the defendant we couldn't let him in on our plans just yet. So we had to think of something ourselves.

"I vote we truss him up!" Akhmadei proposed.

"Oh no," I said. "Only pirates do that. I saw it in the movies. . . ."

"How are we going to punish him then?"

"We could fine him, but where would he get the money to pay the fine?" I said, racking my brains. "And we can't throw him into a dungeon either because there aren't any dungeons. Punishments are far too tame anyway, nowadays. In the olden days they used to hang, draw and quarter you or make you walk the plank. . . ."

Akhmadei was getting impatient.

"What's the use of trying him if we can't punish him properly? How are we going to teach him a lesson?"

I could see his point, but I couldn't think of anything for the life of me. I rubbed my forehead and tugged at my ears—that makes your brain work sometimes—but nothing helped.

"All right, I've had enough of this," said Akhmadei, banging his fist on the box. "We'll lock him up in the shed for a month and be done with it!"

"Don't you think a month is a bit too much?" I ventured timidly.

Akhmadei looked at me pityingly.

"A fine prosecutor you'd make!" he said.

"Well, his parents will start looking for him. We'd only get into trouble ourselves."

Akhmadei thought this over.

"All right then, we'll lock him up for a day and issue him a severe reprimand."

We left it at that.

Besides being a people's assessor I had to be a militiaman that evening. At about eight o'clock, after the small fry had gone home and you could hear the clatter of supper dishes through the open windows, I arrested Yasha on the third floor landing.

He didn't mind being arrested at all. He thought it quite a lark in fact.

"We've never played militiamen before," he said. "It's a wonderful idea. Who thought of it? You? But you'd better let me be the militiaman."

"Listen here," I said sternly. "It's not so funny as you think, so you'd better keep quiet until you see Akhmadei."

Yasha allowed himself to be led to the shed. It was quite dark inside. Akhmadei was sitting on the empty box looking as solemn as any judge. The only thing that spoiled the impression was his red hair. It stuck up all over his head. But what could he do, it wouldn't stay down no matter how much he combed it.

"I say, Akhmadei," Yasha began enthusiastically. "This is a splendid idea of yours. I must admit I've never played militiamen anywhere before."

But the judge squelched him at once.

"This is serious," he said. "You've been caught red-handed and now you're going to be tried and convicted."

Yasha stared at me in amazement.

"That's right," I confirmed. "For fooling your comrades and all that. We're calling you to account."

Yasha's mouth spread out into a broad grin. He let out a loud guffaw, holding his stomach with laughter.



"You chumps!" he gasped. "You can't try me. There's no such law."

The cool cheek of the fellow made me furious.

"Silence, felon!" I shouted. "Attention, the court!"

Yasha stopped laughing at once and pulled himself together.

"Look here, fellows," he said, appealing to each of us in turn, "I can think up a much more exciting game than this. Shall I?"

But Akhmadei was just getting into his stride.

"In the name of the law," he declared sternly, with one eye on me. "We have brought to trial one Yasha alias Black Cape, for the crime of deceiving his comrades. . . ."

He paused and looked at me.

"And diverse other offences," I prompted him.

"And diverse other offences," Akhmadei intoned.

"And also for fraud," I put in. "He threw the coin into the hole himself so we should believe there really was treasure there."

"I didn't!" cried Yasha.

"You did!" I said. "It was the same coin you showed me that time you took the hose away from me."

Yasha darted for the door, but I had been watching him and I was there first.

Yasha was properly angry by now. "I don't recognize your silly court!" he shouted.

"You don't, don't you!" roared Akhmadei. "Mansur, truss him up!"

I pulled a piece of rope out of my pocket. Yasha quieted down at once.

"All right," he said. "We can play at trials if you like. But in real trials the defendant is always allowed to conduct his own defence. So here goes. I've lived in lots of different places as you know, and I've met all sorts of queer chaps, but I've never come across any like you. Fancy wanting to put a chum on trial! What for? Just because the merchants who used to live here didn't hide their treasure under their houses? You ought to be ashamed of yourselves—wanted to get rich quick, didn't you? Well, it didn't work!"

Although Yasha's speech was delivered out of turn—because the prosecutor ought to have spoken first—neither Akhmadei nor I tried to stop him. After all he was right when you came to think of it. Why should he be punished because of those mean merchants?

I couldn't help feeling sorry for Akhmadei though, because he had enjoyed being judge so much. But he could see himself that the trial hadn't come off.

As for Yasha, his conscience wasn't any too clear either. After all, he had tried to fool us with that coin. So instead of making fun of our trial as he would have otherwise, he tried to patch things up and make peace.

"I say," he said. "If you let me off, I promise to think of a wonderful new game. And without any fooling this time. Is it a go?"

I could see that Akhmadei's hands were itching to punch his head, but he decided to give him another chance. After all, Yasha did have some good ideas!

*Translated by Rose Prokofieva
Illustrations by Boris Markevich*

TRAINERS

The bell in the hall gave a short ring. Granny came out of the kitchen to open the door. A boy she had never seen before stood on the landing. He made a little bow and asked very politely: "Could you, please, tell me whether Grisha Utochkin lives here?"

"He do-oes," Granny answered slowly, regarding the boy with some suspicion.

The boy made a good impression on her. His blue trousers were carefully ironed and his yellow short-sleeved sports shirt looked very clean. His golden hair had a neat parting and his pioneer tie was of red silk. But he was holding under his arm a very dirty and ragged padded jacket, while his other hand gripped a piece of rope tied to the collar of a shaggy bow-legged dog of no definite colour. That put Granny on her guard.

"May I see Grisha, please?"

"You may," Granny said after some hesitation. She was about to say that dogs should not be taken into the rooms, as they only made them dirty, but she decided not to and merely added: "That's the door."

But the boy did not take the dog with him into the room. He said to it in a severe voice:

"Sit, Palma! Sit! Do you hear? Sit, I tell you."

Palma gave a yawn and at length sat down with an expression of hopeless boredom on her bearded muzzle. The boy tied the end of the rope to the banisters and only then knocked at the door Granny had indicated.

Grisha, a stocky youngster with a determined-looking face and a shock of dark hair, was sawing at a piece of wood which he had got wedged under his knee on the seat of a chair. He was rather surprised when he recognized in the newcomer Oleg Vershinin, a boy from another class, whom he hardly knew at all. Grisha straightened up, and tucking his shirt in, stared at the visitor in silence.

"Hullo, Utochkin," said Oleg, shutting the door after him. "Don't be surprised to see me. I want to ask you a favour."

"Well?" Grisha gave Oleg a sharp look.

"Could you help me train a dog?"

Grisha was ready for anything but he never wasted words.

"I could. But how?"

"I'm training her to be a professional watch-dog. She's already learnt to come to heel, and sit or lie down when I order her. Now I'm practising the order "attack" with her, so that she'll jump at anybody I order her to. And for that I need an assistant, someone the dog doesn't know."

"For her to jump at?"

"That's it. When I and the other chaps in our class trained her she did it fine, but now she's got to know them all and won't jump at them any more. I've got to get that reflex fixed. That's why I'm asking you. . . ."

"Suppose she bites?" Grisha said thoughtfully, scratching his broad nose.

"I shall keep her on the lead, and anyway, you as an assistant will wear special protective clothing." Oleg unfolded the padded jacket and produced a pair of worn-out padded trousers. "All the chaps in our class took part in training Palma and only Seryozha Laptev got bitten a bit. Agreed?"

"Agreed. Where's the dog?"

"I've left her outside, she mustn't know we know each other. I'll go out with her now and wait for you in Quiet Street. After you've put this outfit on, you come there too; and when you see Palma, sneak up to her as if you were up to something. All right?"

"All right. Get going then!"

Oleg went away. Grisha put on his cap and started arraying himself in the protective clothing. It was not so easy, as the trousers turned out to be rather big. After he had belted them under his arm-pits and tied them up with pieces of tape round his ankles, Grisha looked very much like some huge, fantastically-shaped accordion. The padded jacket which he put on next made things a little better. It came well below his knees and almost completely covered the trousers. The sleeves were far too long but Grisha could not be bothered to roll them up.

Naturally reluctant for his grandmother to see him dressed in this attire, Grisha opened the door slightly to make sure there was nobody about, then slipped quietly out of the flat.

Quiet Street was really a very quiet little street. Low-built houses hid themselves behind the crooked old linden-trees growing at random along the pavements. There was so little traffic that green grass was sprouting between the cobble-stones.

In the distance Grisha caught sight of Oleg, who was walking along the road, saying loudly: "Heel, Palma! Heel!"

"Hey!" his assistant called out quietly.

Oleg stopped and having ordered Palma to sit, nodded to Grisha: "All right. Come on." Grisha pulled his cap over his eyes, stuck out his jaw fiercely and, swinging his long sleeves about, began creeping up to the dog.

Palma noticed Grisha and took a good look at him, putting her bearded head now on one side, now on the other. When Grisha was about ten paces away from her, she got up and gave a low growl.

"Down, Palma! Down!" Oleg said and Palma sat down reluctantly, still growling.

Grisha went down on all fours and growled back.

"Attack!" Oleg shouted.

Palma barked and made such a rush at Grisha that Oleg only just managed to hold her back. Grisha jumped away hastily.

"See that?" Oleg asked softly.

"Yes," Grisha whispered back. "Only she'd have gone for me in any case. . . . I was teasing her."

"Know what? Let's try it without teasing now. You hide round the corner and then come out and walk quietly along the pavement. And don't even look in our direction. All right?"

Grisha ran to the crossroads and hid round the corner. Some minutes later he reappeared and walked unhurriedly along the other side of the street. He drew level with them, he was just going past. . . .

"Attack!"

"Gr-r-rh! Gr-r-rh!"

Grisha looked back and saw Palma straining at the rope to get at him.

"Pretty good, eh?" Oleg shouted from across the street. "That's all, thanks! Test completed. Take your protective clothes off and come over here."

Grisha took off the padded jacket and mopping his brow went up to Oleg. Palma tried to snap at his leg but her master shouted at her and made her sit. He was smiling and his blue eyes shone with pleasure.

"Now you've seen for yourself what good training can do, haven't you? You didn't even look at her and yet she pounced on you!"

Keeping at a distance Grisha picked his nose reflectively. "Well, what about it? I'd been teasing her and she remembered me—no wonder she pounced. She would go for anybody dressed in that get-up. It'd be a different story if she went for that lady over there," and Grisha gave a significant look in the direction of a stout woman wending her way unhurriedly down the other side of the street, with a full shopping bag in her hands.

Oleg stopped smiling and also looked at the woman. When she had gone past he squatted down beside Palma and, pointing after her, ordered quietly:

"Palma, attack!"

A loud bark echoed down the street, and the rope in Oleg's hand gave a violent jerk



"Down, Palma!" Oleg turned triumphantly to Grisha. "Well? What do you say now?"

At last Grisha was convinced of the power of training. Holding his ragged outfit under his arm he squatted down in front of Palma and had a good look at her.

"What breed is she? A mongrel?"

"That's just it, she's only an ordinary mongrel."

"If she was an Alsatian she would pounce even better," Grisha remarked.

"Why d'you think I'm training her? After I've trained her I'll go to the kennels where they breed dogs for service and show them Palma and they'll be sure to give me an Alsatian puppy to train."

Grisha got up. Still looking at Palma he asked: "You sure?"

"Not quite, but I think they will."

"And do we have in our town these . . . er . . . where they breed Alsations?"

"Kennels? Of course, we have. The Volunteer Defence Club has them, so has Militia Headquarters. I'll go to the Volunteer Defence. But before I go I've got to touch up her ladder and barrier work, and self-control."

"What's all that mean?"

"Ladder work is going up and down a step-ladder. Barrier means jumping over fences, and self-control is this. Suppose I order her to sit still, and then go away somewhere myself. Well, even if I'm away as long as half an hour, she must sit without moving and wait for me to come back."

Grisha did not know much about training dogs for service. Of course he had heard about bloodhounds and seen one or two films in which clever Alsatian dogs had helped frontier-guards to perform real feats of valour. But he had always thought that to bring up a dog of that kind one had to be a professional trainer. And now he had seen not a professional but his own schoolmate make a dog, and a common mongrel at that, carry out all sorts of orders. In spite of his surly appearance, Grisha was of an enthusiastic disposition. As he looked at Palma he imagined himself going about with a huge Alsatian that would make everybody jump aside at his approach. He thought of himself coming to school and the way the boys would goggle as, at a word from him, this savage animal would jump the fence, run up the ladder to the attic, and afterwards sit obediently in the yard while he attended lessons.

"Listen, Vershinin, where did you learn to train her?"

"It's easy. I just bought a book called *Professional Dog Training* and it told me everything."

"I'll buy one, too. I don't know about the dog, though. I could get hold of a mongrel, I suppose, but Gran wouldn't let me keep it."

The boys stood on the edge of the pavement and talked. Oleg showed Grisha all the tricks Palma knew. Grisha was so carried away that only the sound of firm, measured steps in the distance made him look round. A tall smart-looking lieutenant of the militia was walking down the other side of the street. His thumbs tucked into his belt, he looked at the two boys with their ugly dog and smiled. Oleg noticed the militiaman, too.

"He's looking," he whispered.

Flattered by the lieutenant's attention, the boys looked at him again and smiled back. The lieutenant answered with a slight wink. And suddenly Grisha remembered Oleg telling him that there was a kennel at the Militia Headquarters. Giving Oleg a nudge he whispered: "Show him the dog! Show him how she pounces!"

"Will it be all right?"

"Why not! Just for fun! Go on, show him!"

Oleg hesitated a moment, then squatted down and, pointing at the militiaman, shouted in a specially loud voice, so that the militiaman should hear: "Palma! Attack!"

Palma leapt forward, jerked the rope out of Oleg's hands and, barking fiercely, rushed towards the militiaman.

"Bunk!" shouted Grisha at the same moment.

What happened to Palma next, the boys did not wait to see. Throwing away his padded jacket, Grisha made for the nearest gate. Oleg dashed after him. There was no time to examine the courtyard in which they found themselves. The only thing they noticed was a big pile of logs by the wall, to the right of the gates, and between this pile and the wall, a gap, not more than a foot wide. As if by agreement, they both turned to the right, wriggled into the gap and held their breath. In a few seconds they heard the sound of measured footsteps, then a tap on a window-pane. It was very near, just by the log-pile. A few more seconds passed. Then there was a click of a latch and the sound of a door opening. A woman's voice asked rather anxiously:

"Who do you want?"

"Your children been disturbing the peace by setting dogs on passers-by."

"Children?" The woman was surprised. "There isn't a single child in the house."

"But I saw them with my own eyes, two of them ran in here. Look what their dog did to me."



"If you don't believe me, go and have a look for yourself. Our yard leads into another street. There's the gate, they must have gone through there."

For a few seconds there was silence.

"Well, I'm sorry," the lieutenant said at last.

"Never mind."

The door slammed. The lieutenant's footsteps receded into the distance, and soon died away completely.

The boys stood squeezed between the brick wall and the wood pile, not daring to move or breathe, with the sharp ends of the logs digging into their ribs and shoulders.

"Get out," Grisha whispered.

"Quiet, you fool," Oleg hissed seizing Grisha's arm above the elbow. He was shivering with fright.

"Get out! He may come back and start looking for us here." Grisha pushed Oleg out from behind the pile. Not even bothering to look round the yard to make sure the militiaman was not there, the boys ran into the street and took to their heels.

They stopped only when they reached Grisha's house. Grisha's nose and cheek were adorned with two big scratches, which he had got in the wood pile. Oleg's new blue trousers were smeared with resin, and wood chips and bits of pine bark were sticking to them.

"We've got ourselves into a fine mess!" Oleg said slowly, when he had recovered his breath. "I was a fool to listen to you."

"You were a fool to let go of that rope!" Grisha muttered and sat down on the steps, resting his chin on his fists and pouting.

Oleg bent over him:

"Do you know what will happen now? Do you think they'll leave it at that? Setting dogs on the arm of the law?"

"Nothing will happen. We'll say it was a mistake, we only wanted to show him the dog."

"Only wanted to show him!" Oleg mimicked. "And who'd believe that, who'd believe we just wanted to show him? How would you prove it?"

Grisha maintained a gloomy silence. He felt rather miserable.

"And to make things worse you've lost the special clothing." Oleg went on nagging him. "I don't need it, but do you know what will happen now? That'll give us away."

"Why?"

"Easy. They'll get hold of a bloodhound, give her the jacket to smell and then she'll sniff us both out. You wore that jacket, too."

At this Grisha felt utterly depressed. He got up and, clasping his hands behind his back, paced about the landing. Then he stopped in front of Oleg:

"Look here! Let's agree now, if you get caught you won't tell them where I live, just say you don't know. And if I'm caught, I shan't say anything about you either."

"All right," Oleg sighed. "Well, I'm off! So long! I haven't done my homework yet."



He peeped out of the doorway, then trotted off down the street, turning to look back every now and then. Grisha drifted upstairs to his flat on the second floor.

Granny opened the door for him and at once noticed the scratches on his face: "How did you get into this state?"

"Oh, it's nothing. . ." Grisha muttered and went into his room.

He loafed about the flat till the evening. Several times he went to the front door and listened nervously to the footsteps on the staircase, expecting the bell to ring any moment and a militiaman with a big Alsatian to appear in the doorway.

And outside, as if to spite him, it was a lovely September day. An exciting football match was going on under Grisha's windows, between the boys of Grisha's house and a team from the neighbouring yard.

"Grisha! Come on! We're loosing without you!" the boys shouted to him every time he looked out of the window.

"I don't feel like it," Grisha would answer sullenly and withdraw into the room.

Evening came. Father and Mother came home from work. At supper Grisha ate his food so half-heartedly that his mother asked worriedly:

"Grisha, dear, what are you looking so unhappy about?"

"Am I?"

She leaned across the table and placed her hand on Grisha's forehead.

"The boy's always got such an appetite, and now he's hardly eating a thing."

"Hasn't been getting on very well with the boys by the look of his nose," said Grisha's father. "Is that right, Grisha?"

Grisha said nothing. Only when they had finished supper and were drinking tea he asked: "Dad, one of our boys set his dog on a militiaman and the dog bit him. What will happen to that boy now if he's caught?"

"What will happen? They'll fine his parents, write to the school about it. . . . Nobody pats you on the back for that kind of thing."

"That was today's young man, I suppose," Granny remarked.

"Today's?"

"The one that came to see Grisha this morning. He looked tidy enough but he had a dog with him. Oh, such a horrible dog, the sight of him was enough to give you the shivers."

The next day was Sunday. The whole family was going to dinner at Grisha's aunt's, whose birthday it was that day. At first Grisha wanted to say he was not well and stay at home, then he thought how lonely he would feel all by himself in the flat, when he could be sitting with Auntie's cheerful guests, eating all sorts of nice things and listening to the radiogram.

Unfortunately his parents decided not to go by bus but walk. It was a nasty two kilometres for Grisha. Every militiaman looked to him like yesterday's lieutenant, and Grisha's progress down the street was attended by complicated

manoeuvres. As soon as he saw a figure in militia uniform in front of him, he would drop behind his parents and walk with his face almost buried in his father's back. If he saw a militiaman behind, he would go in the front and walk so close to his parents that they kept treading on his heels. "Look here, old man," his father said irritably, "can't you walk the way normal people do? Why do you keep spinning round as if someone had wound you up?"

At that moment a tall militiaman came out of a shop and walked towards them. Grisha did not wait to examine his face or his badges. He just whisked into the nearest doorway and ran up the stairs to the second floor. For the next two or three minutes the Utochkin family stood in front of the house, uttering vain shouts: "Grisha! Stop playing the fool! A grown-up boy like you!"

"Any more of your pranks and home you go!"

Going to school next morning, Grisha took similar precautions. At the school gates he met Oleg. Instead of his blue trousers Oleg had on a pair of grey ones, and a white shirt instead of the yellow. He was wearing a Crimean straw hat with a wide brim, which made him look like a large mushroom.

"Well?" Grisha asked after saying hullo to Oleg.

"Not bad so far. I've changed my clothes as a disguise. See?"

"Did Palma come back?"

"She did, yesterday. What about you?"

"All right for the present."

Three days passed uneventfully. Little by little Grisha recovered his nerve. Once again he started playing football with the boys, and soon he no longer dashed to hide in a doorway at the sight of a militiaman. It was the same with Oleg. Soon Grisha returned to his dreams of training an Alsatian and, on meeting Oleg one day asked him whether he was still training Palma.

"No, she's ill at the moment."

"What's wrong with her?"

"I don't really know. She won't eat or drink anything, and she's lying down all the time. . . ."

"When you start training her again will you take me with you? I want to learn."

Oleg promised he would but this is what happened next Sunday.

The family was having dinner. Grisha's grandmother had gone out to the kitchen to fetch something. Suddenly there was a ring at the door. Granny opened the front door and came back with Oleg. He was breathing heavily, either from excitement or because he had been running hard. His nose and forehead were covered with tiny beads of sweat.

"Hullo!" he said, and added after a pause: "Sorry to interrupt."

Then he waited a minute, drew a deep breath and suddenly blurted out: "Utochkin, I've come to tell you you've got to be inoculated."

The room was very quiet for a second.

"What do you mean?" asked Grisha.

"Against hydrophobia. Our Palma's got ill. She won't eat or drink and now she's gone and got herself lost. Mum went to the vet and they told her there



that Palma might have hydrophobia, the mild form. That's what they said. So now you and me, and Mum, and our other assistants have got to have inoculations."

"I see," said Grisha's father quietly.

"I knew it! I knew something was going to happen!" said Granny. "As soon as he came round here with that dog of his I was sure there would be trouble over that dog."

Oleg added that the inoculation must be done urgently because Palma might have been ill for a long time. After he had gone Grisha asked his father what the signs of hydrophobia were and spent the whole evening running to the kitchen to drink water from the tap to see whether he had the disease already. He went to bed in a very gloomy mood and when he woke up next morning he was still miserable. But when he got to school he cheered up.

At the school door a large crowd of boys met him with laughter and shouts:

"Here he comes! Another rabid one!"

"Hullo, looney!"

It turned out that, besides Grisha, Oleg had had thirteen more assistants, and today they were all to go to the inoculation centre. Everyone at school knew about it, and there was no end to the jokes. "The rabid ones" did not mind the jokes, they were enjoying themselves to the full. Some of the girls thought Oleg's assistants were already infectious and were afraid to come near them. Between classes, to the general delight, Oleg's assistants ran about after these girls, snapping their teeth and howling fiercely.

After lessons, about forty schoolchildren decided to accompany Oleg and his assistants to the inoculation centre.

"Come on, Oleg, you give the orders! Form your loonies up," they shouted when the boys came out into the street.

"Loonies! Fall in! Right wheel, quick march!" Oleg ordered.

The grinning assistants marched in twos along the street, followed by a dense crowd of their schoolmates whistling and trumpeting like a brass band.

When they reached the inoculation centre the noise they created made the whole medical staff look out of the windows in alarm. At first the doctors and nurses were very angry with them, but on learning that it was Oleg and his fourteen assistants (they had heard about the case from his mother the day before), they also began to laugh.

The rest of the children stayed in the yard while Oleg and his assistants went in and queued up at a little window with the notice over it: "Registration of Once Bitten." And that only added to their merriment. Grisha even

ran outside and informed the boys: "Now we're not loonies, we're 'once bitten!'"

After they had got their chits for the injections, the boys went out into the yard. "Once bitten, fall in!" Oleg commanded and they marched triumphantly to their district dispensary, where a good dose of serum was injected into their insides. And though the injections were rather painful, everyone was still as cheerful.

After that the "once bitten" and their followers broke up and went home. Grisha and Oleg who had the farthest to go were soon left alone. Oleg strode along beside Grisha, talking about the events of the day.

"Palma has made us famous all over the school!" he said, smiling. "We may have to have injections but . . ."

"But it was fun all right," Grisha put in.

"The main thing," Oleg went on loftily, "is to treat everything with a sense of humour. If you treat everything with humour, then no troubles. . . ."

He broke off, slowed his pace and soon stopped altogether, staring in front of him. He was not smiling any longer. His face had paled and wore an expression of utter dismay. Grisha followed Oleg's gaze and his face also fell.

Not far away, at the next crossroads stood a militiaman on point duty, a short man with a big turned-up moustache. For about half a minute the boys regarded the militiaman in silence, then looked at each other.

"What about the lieutenant, eh?" Grisha asked in a small voice.

Oleg made no reply. The boys started off again but did not say anything for a long time.

"Perhaps she didn't bite him after all," Grisha said at last.

"How do I know!" Oleg answered, dropping his voice almost to a whisper.

"And maybe she hasn't got hydrophobia at all?"

Suddenly Oleg stopped abruptly: "But suppose she has? Suppose she did bite him? What then?" he shouted in an unexpectedly high-pitched voice.

"Should we warn him?" Grisha asked staring at the ground.

"Do you think we shouldn't? You think we shouldn't warn him? Suppose he dies because of us, what then?"

"That's just what I'm saying, we should."

"It's all very well for you to say we should! But how can you warn him? How? I suppose you'll just go up to him and say: 'Hullo. It was us that set the dog on you. Now you've got to have injections.' Is that what you'll tell him? Do you know what he'll do to us?"

The boys came to the porch of an old mansion, ornamented with rather dilapidated stone lions. Oleg dropped his satchel on the steps and sat down on it. Grisha sat down beside him. Oleg's eyes were red, he kept on blinking his wet eyelashes and sniffing.

"What a fool I was to listen to you! No, worse than a fool, just an idiot! Dad's coming home from his holidays the day after tomorrow and this is the present I've got for him. . . . 'Pay two hundred roubles fine for your son!'"

"And they'll expel us from the Young Pioneers too," Grisha added.

They sat for a long time on that porch, between the two stone lions. They looked so miserable that people stared at them as they went past. It was past dinner-time, but neither Oleg nor Grisha could think about food. Each of them unhappily imagined how he would be detained at the militia station, how his unsuspecting parents would be called there too, and how, the worst thing of all, in front of the whole class his Pioneer tie would be taken away from him. Each felt it would be too hard to bear. But at the same time it made their flesh creep to think about the lieutenant who might die a terrible death because of their cowardice.

"He may have children," Grisha said slowly. Oleg was silent, then he said resolutely: "We shan't do anything till Dad comes home. He'll be here the day after tomorrow and I'll give him a good welcome. And the day after that we'll go and give ourselves up."

Grisha made no reply. Oleg was silent for a while, then he got up suddenly: "No, I can't! Better do it at once than go on like this for two more days. Come on!"

Grisha did not stir. He was still sitting on the steps, with his head bent low.

"Well, let's go! Why put it off once you've made up your mind?" Oleg said.

"Go where?" Grisha mumbled without raising his head.

"To the militia, to our district branch. Let's go and tell them everything and they'll find the lieutenant themselves and warn him. Come on!"

But even now Grisha did not stir: "Why should I go anyhow? It's your dog, you go yourself."

"So that's what you're like! All right! It's up to you! . . ." Oleg gave a half sob. "It was your idea to set the dog on him, and now you're backing out. . . ."

Oleg walked away without looking back, and though he held himself very straight, his narrow shoulders were quivering.

Grisha looked up and watched his friend walking away. The next minute he was on his feet, running after him: "All right. Come on!"

The friends walked down the street together. When they had gone some distance in silence, Oleg said loudly, with a sudden burst of confidence in his voice: "You'll see, we won't get into trouble! You'll see. . . . They'll understand! . . . Why, it's a noble action. . . . Why, we may even be saving his life, eh? They'll understand, won't they?"

Grisha breathed heavily without replying.

They stopped at a doorway with a notice up: "Third Militia District."

"Coming?" Oleg said barely audibly, with a glance at Grisha.

"All right," Grisha whispered.

Neither of them moved.

"Well, shall we go in?" Oleg said after a minute or two.

"Let's."

Oleg opened the door ajar, peeped inside, then crept in through the doorway. Grisha entered in the same furtive manner.

The boys found themselves in a long corridor lined with closed doors. Only

the first door on the right was open. It led into a room divided in two by a wooden barrier. The first half of the room was empty except for the militiaman standing by the door. Behind the barrier a small, fat lieutenant with a red face was standing at a desk, shouting angrily into a telephone. At a desk in the far corner sat another militiaman.

"What do you want?" the militiaman at the door asked sternly as soon as the boys showed themselves.

"We? . . . We. . . er. . . want to see the chief. . ." Oleg mumbled.

"What chief? You mean the duty officer? What about?"

"There's something. . . something very important we've got to report. . ."

"The duty officer's busy. Sit down and wait," said the militiaman and repeated sarcastically: "Report!"

Oleg and Grisha sat down on a bench with a high back. By this time they felt thoroughly frightened, for the fat lieutenant had now grown purple in the face and, his little eyes flashing, was shouting into the telephone and getting more and more heated every moment:

"I'm not prepared to receive a reprimand for your sake, Comrade Frolov! Do I make myself clear? I won't do it! I'd rather give you a reprimand myself. The letter's here. Yes, here, Comrade Frolov." The lieutenant picked up a green envelope from his desk, waved it above his head and threw it down on the desk again. "Don't give me any of that nonsense, Comrade Frolov! You're old enough to know better!"

Grisha felt Oleg give him a nudge and heard him whisper anxiously:

"We're fools! Let's get out of here! We can always write them a letter. A letter's just as good."

The boys got up to go.

"That's enough! Not another word!" the fat lieutenant shouted furiously, slammed down the receiver, and breathing heavily, turned to the boys: "Well, what can I do for you?"

The boys exchanged glances and made no reply.

"Well? What do you want?" the lieutenant raised his voice.

"We. . . er. . . Oh, nothing. . . We just. . . dropped in." Oleg stammered.

"You just dropped in! What do you think this is, a recreation park?"

"We. . . . Come on, Grisha," Oleg said hastily.

The boys made for the door but came to a sudden halt, their mouths open and eyes bulging in horror. In the doorway stood *that* lieutenant.

Grisha never remembered how long the icy silence lasted. It seemed hours before Oleg forced out in a weak voice: "Good afternoon, Comrade Lieutenant."

"Good afternoon!" the lieutenant answered, surveying the boys.

And suddenly the trainer and his assistant, as though swept on by a wave of desperation, both started talking at once. It all came out in a rush:

"Comrade Lieutenant, we. . . we're sorry, it was us who set that dog on you. . ."

"Yes. . . by mistake. . . we just wanted to show you. . ."

"We were training her to be a watch-dog."

"He let go of the lead by accident. He just wanted to show you and she broke away."

"We had trained her to obey the order to attack and we were going to go to the kennels and show them how we were training her."

"You'll have to have injections now. . . ."

"And we wanted to ask if you'd give us a real Alsatian for us to train, and we'd. . . ."

"Because she may have hydrophobia. We've had to have injections to. . . ."

While the boys poured out their flood of explanations, the lieutenant's face became more and more stern, and more and more angry:

"All right! That's enough!" he snapped suddenly and, thrusting his hands into his pockets, started pacing up and down the room with big strides.

The boys fell silent. They had talked themselves to a standstill.

"Oh, hell!" the tall lieutenant exclaimed suddenly.

The duty officer was sitting with his head lowered over his desk and Grisha noticed he was biting his lips to stop himself from laughing. The militiaman sitting in the corner had covered his face with the outspread fingers of his right hand and his shoulders were quivering. The other militiaman standing at the door was also restraining a smile.

"Hell!" the lieutenant repeated, and suddenly pulling his hands out of his pockets and clenching his fists, he halted in front of the boys. "You young. . . . Why, I'll. . . I'll. . . ." he shouted, and without finishing what he was going to say, again began pacing up and down the room.

"Was that the one that tore the knee out of your trousers?" the duty officer asked, still staring down at his desk.

The lieutenant made no reply. Then the duty officer looked up at Grisha: "Well, your name and address, please."

"3, Kuznetsov Street, Flat No. 8," Grisha answered quietly.

The duty officer wrote the address on a slip of paper and looked at Oleg: "Yours?"

"15, Korolenko Road, Flat No. 1."

"All right. You can go."

The boys went to the door, but before he had gone two paces Oleg stopped and turned to the duty officer: "Could you tell us, please, what'll happen to us now?"

"We'll see. You'd better go while the going's good."

The militiaman standing at the door flicked Grisha lightly on the head as he went past.

When they reached the street the boys broke into a run, as though they were afraid the lieutenant would appear and come dashing after them. In the nearest side-street Oleg stopped suddenly, pushed his hands into his trousers' pockets and leaned back against the wall.

"Stupid fools, stupid fools!" he said slowly and quietly.

"Who is?"

"We are. Why did we give the right addresses? They wouldn't have checked it."

Grisha's only answer was a sigh.

Grisha waited eleven days for his parents to be summoned to the militia station. On the twelfth, when he was at school, there was a ring at the bell. Granny opened the door and saw a tall lieutenant in militia uniform.

"Beg your pardon. Does Grisha Utochkin live here?"

"Y-e-s, he does," Granny replied anxiously.

"Is he in?"

"Er, no. . . . He's at school."

"May I come in for a minute?"

Granny stepped aside to let the lieutenant in, and it was only then that she noticed he was leading an Alsatian puppy with a sharp nose, pointed ears and long, sturdy legs.

"Would you mind giving him this, please," said the lieutenant, placing the end of the lead in Granny's hand "There's an inscription on the collar. And tell them Lieutenant Samoilenko sends them both his kind regards."

The lieutenant saluted and took his leave. Granny dropped the lead and stood for a long time with her hands on her hips staring at the puppy, which was padding round the hall, sniffing. Then she went into the room, put on her spectacles, came back into the hall and bent down over the puppy.

"Well, puppy, come here, little fellow," she said making a clucking sound with her lips. The puppy came up to her, wagging his tail and grinning. Granny held him still and found the metal plate on his collar. On it there was an engraved inscription:

"To Grisha Utochkin and Oleg Vershinin from the staff of the Third Militia District."

"Well, I never! . . ." Granny whispered to herself.

*Translated by Inna Daglish
Illustrations by Fyodor Lemkul*

Alexei MARKOV

THE HEDGEHOG

Long ago, the hedgehog's fur
Was soft as silk, and just as pretty;
He'd nestle in your arms and purr,
As trustful as the tamest kitty.

But ever since the fox, so sly,
And hungry wolf went on his track
No longer trustful is his eye—
He now wears needles on his back.

Translated by Louis Zellikoff

Illustrated by Aminodav Kanevsky





Ruvim FRYERMAN

The Travellers Trudged out of the City...

In Memory of Arkadi Gaidar

One summer day Gaidar and I decided to go fishing in a woodland district some way from a big town. Our train left Moscow by night, a mild, unusually lovely night which promised as mild and clear a day on the morrow. We preferred to sit up and talk instead of going to bed.

With us was a young boy. Where Gaidar had picked him up or how he had happened to bring him along I had no idea, but I did know very well that children attached themselves to him instantaneously, even on the street. Even after

exchanging a few words, they were ready to follow him to the ends of the earth, as though in obedience to some magic power that was his alone.

However, I felt a little troubled by this particular boy. He wasn't an altogether ordinary one. He wrote poetry. The beret he wore barely covered his head and in his hands he carried a great bunch of fishing rods, sufficient for a whole flock of the tow-headed village boys whose guests we were to be.

His knapsack was packed full. He struggled out of it and flung it right on the floor.

"I read an American story the other day about how they use grasshoppers as bait for trout," he told us. "They take with them not only a tent and an oil stove but two blankets, one to spread on the damp ground and the other to cover themselves with. That's real travellers for you. Prepared for anything. . . ."

I wonder if this isn't another Montihomo Hawkclaw á la Chekhov's, I thought, with a questioning glance at Gaidar.

But Gaidar only smiled and let down the window by our seat.

"You, American," he said to the boy, "better take a look at the stars."

We looked out of the window. It was fine out. The Moscow sky, glowing in the lights of the earth, had already been left behind, and over us and the drowsy fir-trees beyond the tracks spread an altogether different sky, full of large stars from which, through the dark air, fine threads of light seemed to be spun all the way to the grass on the hillsides.

But without so much as a glance at the stars the boy suddenly began to recite his own poetry.

The poems were poor and I fully expected Gaidar to tell the unlucky poet so at once.

But Gaidar only asked:

"Tell me, my friend, what made you decide to be a writer? Love of literature?"

"Yes!" the boy concurred at once. "And then I think it's the easiest thing to be."

"So," nodded Gaidar. "Well, chum, perhaps you're right. What do you say, we write a story together? Anyhow, we've nothing better to do now."

The boy was extremely flattered. He took off his beret and shifted closer to Gaidar.

"I guess we may as well try," he said. "How do you go about it, Arkadi Petrovich?"

"Quite simply. Only there's one condition: you'll begin and I'll finish."

"Yes, that'll be better," agreed the boy. "I never do know how to finish."

"And I never know how to begin," said Gaidar.

I laughed quietly, curious to see how this game would end. Gaidar never began this sort of thing aimlessly.

"What kind of story shall we write?" asked the boy.

"Anything you like. Only an adventure story would be best, something in the style of Jules Verne. After all, here are the two of us, on our way to a big forest and unknown lakes—who knows what adventures may befall us. You've got a good imagination, so just go right to it. Put your rods down in the corner—nobody will touch them, put your beret back on again and think. Or, if you like, you needn't think, just begin. You write the first sentence and I'll add the second."

Gaidar took a blue notebook and a pencil from the mapcase he always carried with him and placed them on the table.

At first the lad was a bit taken aback to see paper and pencil before him, but then, following Gaidar's instructions, moved closer to the light and fell to thinking. He didn't have to think long though. He wrote the first sentence and read it to us:

"The travellers trudged out of the city."

"Excellent!" Gaidar exclaimed with curious satisfaction. "Now we have the first sentence, and the second. . . . I'll write the second one tomorrow."

The boy was very much disappointed.

"Tomorrow, Arkadi Petrovich? I thought you'd do it now."

"No, no, chum, tomorrow, when we trudge out of the city, I'll write the second. We'll work backwards. Whatever we write, that we'll do. And now let's get some sleep."

Gaidar slung the small canvas sack in which he carried bread, tea and sugar on to the upper berth and climbed up after it, hoisting his big body up with ease. He was soon fast asleep.

The boy stretched out on the seat, pillowing his head on his beret. The notebook with his first sentence lay open on the table all through the night.

We arrived at the town nearest to our fishing grounds in the morning. The sun was already scattering its hot, sharp glitter over the cobbled roadway and the asphalt pavement from which rose the smell of warm dust.

We set out at a leisurely pace.

Neither Gaidar nor the boy mentioned the story any more and I thought they had forgotten all about it.

It was a long walk we had ahead of us, all the way across the town and down to the river. At first the walking was pleasant. The street leading away

from the station was lined by young lime-trees that cast a shade on the coal-blackened sand. Women were getting water at the hydrants and the murmur of the running water and the clatter of the tin pails in their hands seemed to moderate the steadily increasing heat a little.

But twice already the boy had stopped to ask for a drink. His heavy knapsack pulled his shoulders back, the rods got in his way. Drops of sweat started out on his forehead.

Suddenly he stopped.

"Arkadi Petrovich," he said, "why don't we take a bus? I have some money with me."

"Oh, I've got money too," answered Gaidar. "The trouble is, chum, we've got to walk out of the city, not ride. Now, if you'd written: 'The travellers rode out of the city on a bus,' then we'd probably do so. I guess it would have been better than walking, at that."

"Well, then, when will we be able to ride?" asked the boy.

"Why, when we look back and see that we can truly write in the notebook that the travellers trudged out of the city."

The boy sighed softly and walked on, wiping the sweat from his face with his free hand.

The further we went the further the town seemed to spread before us. By noon we had only passed through the centre with its shops and crossroads along which cars rolled with a soft rubbery sound. The sun seemed to be dissolving in its own heat; on the melting asphalt our shadows fell at our very feet.

After a while we came to quieter streets where high above the river stood an old church of red stone, with a heavy dome and ornamented white columns. We stopped and rested a little in its shade and meanwhile had our penknives sharpened by a passing knife grinder.

Then we plodded on again.

The boy kept stopping and looking back at the city.

"Now can we write it?" he asked every other minute.

"Well, take a look around you. Have we left the city yet?"

But the city stretched on and on. We were in its suburbs now, with their rickety fences and wooden houses and front gardens, with green grass forcing its way up in between the cobbles over which bumped buses carrying passengers from the pier to the railway station.

At one point where the road made a sharp turn to the right the boy thought the town had ended at last. Before us lay fields and gardens descending all the way down to the river.

"There, now we've come to the end!" he exclaimed.

But the next turning brought us to another street where the houses stood huddled closer than ever.

Tears welled to the boy's eyes. He sat down on the curbstone.

"Oh, what shall I do?" he moaned. "I can't walk another step. I'd rather go back to the station and take the first train home."

"Suit yourself," answered Gaidar. "Only in that case you and I won't write the story and you'll never learn what happened next."

"I don't care any more," said the boy, rising to flag the heavy blue bus that was now approaching.

Gaidar made no move to detain him. He parted with him coolly.

"Fare you well, chum. It can't be helped. You should have trudged out of the city first and only then written in the notebook: 'The travellers trudged out of the city!'"

After the boy rode off and we had rested a while by the roadside, we continued on our way. I looked round at Gaidar. His face bore a thoughtful expression, at once stern and sad. There even seemed a hint of cruelty in it. I'd never before seen him look like that.

"Why did you do it, Arkadi?" I asked.

"How can you ask? He's doubly at fault. He didn't know what he was writing about and didn't want to know what happened next. What if he really does become a writer?"

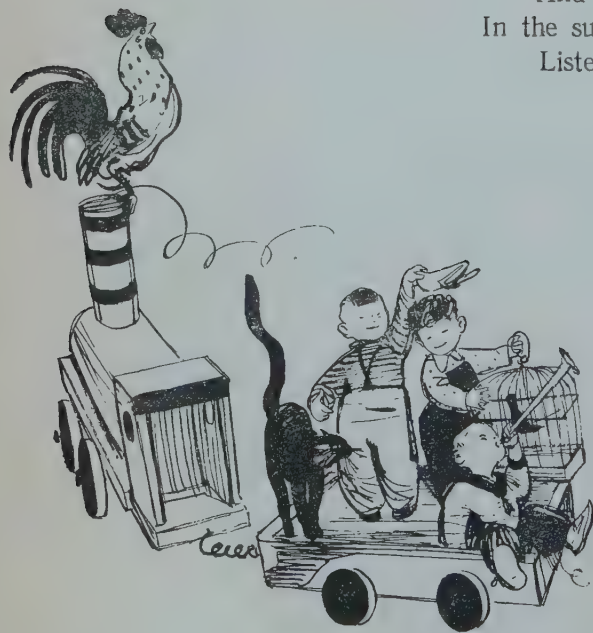
Though I felt sorry for the boy, I made no answer. I knew that where truth in art was concerned, Gaidar excused no one—not even a little boy.

*Translated by Asya Shoyett
Illustrated by Andrei Livanov*

*Heigh-ho!
Off We Go*

Away, away we're going
Far-off lands to see,
A merry breeze is blowing,
A merry band are we.

Off we start together,
And as we speed along
In the sunny weather
Listen to our song—



Heigh-ho! Off we go;
We take with us a dog named Joe,
A pussy-cat, a cockatoo,
A dickie-bird, a kangaroo.
Never, never, did you see
Such a lively company!

Everything is cheery
When you've friends around,
Hours will not be weary,
Many joys are found.
When you go a long way
Take your friends along;
They'll keep you off the wrong way
And join you in this song—

Heigh-ho! On we go,
And with us go the dog named Joe,
The pussy-cat, the cockatoo,
The dickie-bird, the kangaroo.
Never, never did you see
Such a lively company!

Loud we sing our chorus
As the miles fly past;
Stretching out before us,
Homeward road at last.
Tired, but happy-hearted
In the setting sun,
Back to where we started,
Singing, everyone—

Heigh-ho! Home we go;
Home we bring the dog named Joe,
The pussy-cat, the cockatoo,
The dickie-bird, the kangaroo.
Never, never did you see
Such a lively company!

Translated by Archie Johnstone

Illustrated by Fyodor Lemkul



WORD of HONOUR

By L. PANTELEYEV



It's such a pity I don't know the little boy's name, or where he lives, or who his father and mother are. It was so dark I couldn't even make out his face properly. I only remember he had freckles on his nose, and that he had short trousers, which were held up not by a belt, but with those little braces that go over the shoulders and button somewhere in front.

One day in the summer I happened to go into a little park on Vasilyevsky Island, near the White Church. I had an interesting book with me and I became so engrossed in it that I didn't notice the evening coming on. When it finally got too dark to read, I closed the book with a snap, stood up and walked towards the gate.

The park was empty, lights could be seen twinkling in the streets, and the keeper was ringing his bell somewhere behind the trees.

I was afraid the gate would be closed and hastened my steps.

Suddenly I stopped. It seemed to me I had heard someone crying behind the bushes.

I turned down a side path towards a little hut showing white in the darkness, the kind they have in most city parks to keep gardening tools in. Outside

it a little boy about seven years old was standing with his head lowered, sobbing loudly.

"What's the matter, old chap?" I called to him.

He looked up at me and said: "Nothing."

"Nothing? Has somebody hurt you?"

"No."

"Then why are you crying?"

It was still hard for him to speak, he had not yet swallowed all his tears and he kept hiccuping and sniffing between his sobs.

"Come along," I said. "Look how late it is, the park will be closed in a minute."

I tried to take his hand, but he jerked it away sharply.

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"I can't go away from here."

"You can't go away from here? Why not? What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing," he said.

"Aren't you well?"

"No, I'm all right."

"Then why can't you go?"

"I'm a sentry," he said.

"A sentry?!"

"Can't you see? It's a game."

"But who are you playing with?"

The boy did not answer for a moment, then sighed and said: "I don't know."

Well, I must say that made me think there must be something not quite right with the boy's head.

"Look here," I said. "What do you mean? You say you're playing, and yet you don't know who you're playing with?"

"No, I don't," he said. "I was sitting in the park, and some big boys came up to me and said, 'Do you want to play soldiers?' So I said I did. And we started playing. 'You're a sergeant,' they said. And one big boy, he was a marshal, he brought me here and said, 'This is our ammunition dump. You're going to be a sentry. Stand on guard here till I come and relieve you.' So I said I would and he said, 'Give me your word of honour you won't go away.'"

"Then what?"

"So I said, 'I give my word of honour I won't go away.'"

"And what happened after that?"

"So I'm still standing here, and they won't come back."

"I see," I said, smiling. "Is it long since you were put on guard?"

"Before it got dark."

"But where are they?"

The boy sighed again and said: "I think they've gone away."

"Gone away?"

"They've forgotten."

"Then why are you standing here?"

"I gave my word of honour. . . ."

I was about to laugh, but it suddenly occurred to me that there was nothing to laugh at and the boy was absolutely right. If he had given his word, he had to stick it out no matter what happened, game or no game.

"Well, you're in a fix, aren't you?" I said. "What are you going to do?"

"I don't know," said the boy, and began to cry again.

I very much wanted to help him. But what could I do? Go and look for the silly fellows who had put him on guard, made him give his word of honour, then gone off home themselves? How could I find them now anyway? They had probably had their supper and gone to bed, and by now were far away in the land of dreams.

But their sentry was still on guard. In the dark. And hungry too, probably.

"I expect you're pretty hungry," I said.

"Yes, I am," he replied.

"Well, listen to me," I said after thinking a moment. "You run off home and have your supper while I keep guard for you here."

"Will you?" said the boy. "Will that be all right?"

"Why not?"

"You aren't a soldier."

I scratched my head and said: "No, I'm not. It won't work. I can't even relieve you. Only a soldier can do that, only your C.O."

And suddenly I had an idea. If it was only a soldier who could free the boy of his promise and take him off guard duty, then what was I waiting for? I must go and find a soldier.

I told the boy to wait a minute and ran off to the park entrance.

The gate was not yet closed and the keeper was still tinkling his bell somewhere in the depths of the park.

I stood at the gate waiting for some military man to come along. But as luck would have it, there were no soldiers about.

I caught a glimpse of black greatcoats on the other side of the street. Good. They must be sailors. But when I crossed over, I found they were only trade school boys. A tall railway man went past in a fine greatcoat with bright purple collar tabs. But even he and his splendid coat were no use to me at the moment.

I was about to go back empty-handed to the park, when at the tram stop on the corner, I caught sight of an army officer's uniform and a cap with a blue cavalry band. I don't think I have ever been so pleased in my life as I was at that moment. I rushed to the tram stop. But before I could get there I saw a tram approaching and the officer, a young cavalry major, moving forward with the crowd to get inside.

I dashed up to him panting and grabbed his arm.

"Comrade Major," I shouted. "Wait a minute! Comrade Major! . . ."

He looked round at me in surprise: "What's going on?"

"You see. . . . You see, there's a boy here, by the hut in the park, he's on sentry duty. He can't go away, he gave his word of honour. . . . He's crying. . . ."

By now he had missed his tram and he looked at me in great annoyance.

But when I explained in more detail what it was all about, he agreed at once.

"Yes, of course. Why didn't you say so before?"

When we reached the park, the keeper was locking the gate. I asked him to wait a few minutes, saying there was a boy left behind in the park, and the major and I hurried down the path.

We could hardly find the little white hut in the dark. The boy was still standing where I had left him, and crying again, but very quietly. I called to him. He was so glad he even shouted for joy.

"Well, here we are," I said. "I've brought your C.O."

At the sight of the officer the boy stiffened to attention and became several inches taller.

"Comrade Sentry," said the major. "What's your rank?"

"I'm a sergeant," said the boy.

"Comrade Sergeant, I order you to dismiss from your post."

The boy was silent, then sniffed and said: "But what rank are you? I can't see your stars. . . ."

"I'm a major."

Then the boy put his hand to the broad peak of his old grey cap and said. "Very good, Comrade Major, I dismiss."

And he said it in such a ringing voice and so smartly that we both burst out laughing.

And the boy, too, laughed happily and with relief.

As soon as we were outside the park the gate slammed behind us and the keeper turned the key several times in the lock.

The major held out his hand to the boy.

"Good for you, Comrade Sergeant!" he said. "You'll make a real soldier. Good-bye!"

The boy mumbled something and also said good-bye.

Then the major saluted us both and, seeing that another tram was coming, ran to the stop.

I, too, said good-bye to the boy and shook hands.

"Perhaps I ought to take you home?" I said.

"No, it's not far. I'm not afraid," he said.

I looked at his little freckled nose and realized that he really was not afraid. A boy with a will like that, and so good at keeping his word, would not be afraid of the dark, not afraid of roughs, not afraid of other, worse things.

And when he grew up? It was too early to say what he would be when he grew up, but whatever it was, he would certainly be a real man.

The thought made me feel glad I had met him. I squeezed his hand again with a feeling of real pleasure.

*Translated by Robert Daglish
Illustrated by Fyodor Lemkul*



L. Panteleyev



Ruvim Fryerman



Lev Kassil



Valentin Katayev

The TWO TUBS

In our garden, we've two tubs:
The first one stands
Among the shrubs,
Where the sun is hot and broiling,
Sets the water almost boiling.

Number two stands by the door
Of the woodshed, where there's more
Shelter from the summer heat;
The water in it's cool and sweet.

Then, say I,
Just tell me why
There is always so much more
Water in the tub
By the shrub
Than in the tub
That's by the door?

What's the matter?
There's the rub!
Can it be a magic tub?

Now this question set me thinking;
I sat down and racked my brain,
Late for dinner, spirits sinking,
But my thinking was in vain.

Very well, then, let's apply
Logic to this case, thought I:
The tubs are quite
Water-tight,
And Nature's laws
Have no flaws,
So the teachers can't be right.



9

1.





Susanna GEORGIEVSKAYA

GRANNY'S SEA

JUST YOU WAIT!

There she was—Granny. The mother of Olga's father. She was standing on the station platform shading her eyes with one hand as she searched the train that was snorting and swaying to a standstill. She had on a black woollen skirt, a loose white blouse, and a kerchief. She did not look the least bit like a cavalier—a Cavalier of the Order of Lenin. But an Order of Lenin was pinned to her breast.

Olga's father always called her a cavalier, but she turned out to be just an old woman. Or rather, an elderly woman, because old ones are mostly smaller and fatter, like Olga's other grandmother, Granny Capitolina. This granny was tall and lean and had a thin face that looked cross. But she had eyes as clear and bright as bottle-glass.

"Good day, Zinaida," she said to Olga's mother, whom she had never seen before. And they kissed. If you could call it kissing. They just put their cheeks together and smacked the air.

Olga stood aside and watched her granny.

"Is this Olga?" asked Granny at last, looking at Olga with her bright eyes. "Come here, granddaughter, and let me get a better look at you."

Granny looked at her. She looked at her red checked cape and pointed red cap with a tassel at the end, and shook her head. The corners of her mouth twitched as if she wanted to laugh, but she did not laugh. She just patted Olga on the head with her big rough hand, making Olga's cap fall off. It was picked up by an old man with a ring in one ear and a whip in his hand who gave off great whiffs of scent.

"My, how you have doused yourself, Mitrich!" Granny said to him as he handed Olga her cap. "This is my granddaughter Olga. She's six years old already—the daughter of my youngest."

The old man shifted his whip from his right hand to his left, made a low bow, and laughed. When he laughed the ring in his ear shook and glittered.

"He's the coachman at our kolkhoz," said Granny. "Well, let's go, Mitrich."

The old man walked off. Presently he came driving back to the station in a long black carriage on high springs. Olga had seen such carriages at the circus, but the circus ones had been bigger.

The first to climb in was Granny. She put a firm foot on the step, at which the carriage made a little bow to her and let out a squeak. Olga's mother climbed in from the other side. She leapt up lightly and sat down next to Granny, pulling her soft coat about her. The next moment Mitrich had seized Olga under the arms and lifted her up on to a folding seat opposite Mummy and Granny. When everyone was seated, he himself climbed up in front and gave a flourish of his whip.

"Drive fast," said Granny sternly, drawing her lips into a tight line.

The carriage began to move. Granny sat with her arms folded, cupping her sharp elbows in her palms. Next to her sat Mummy in her little hat with a feather in it. Olga could see that Mummy felt uneasy with Granny; she sat bolt upright and said not a word—only gave a little cough now and then.

"Faster!" said Granny to the old man with the ear-ring.

The horses were not at all frightened by his cries. They kept on taking dainty little steps, cantering as before, and the carriage went on bouncing over the ruts and ridges of the dusty road.

They rode past some little white houses surrounded by trees. And an odd thing: in the yards on the other side of the wattle-fences stood little white stoves in the shade of the trees, right out in the open. And smoke came pouring out of the stoves. And the whole street smelt of this smoke and something else—was it wet leaves? Grass grew along the fences at the edge of the road and, peeping out from among the dusty leaves and vines, could be glimpsed the pink blossoms of convolvuluses.

It was a very long street. A hot wind stirred up the dust in the roadway. Barefoot cyclists, tired out by the heat, rode slowly down the slope, rarely pushing their pedals, never sounding their bells. Housewives came running out to

stare at the carriage and at Granny. They stood looking at Granny, but Granny did not look at them. She sat very stiff and erect, her head held high, tapping her elbows with her fingers.

The carriage turned when it came to a bluff at the end of the street. Down below stretched something wide and enormous. The sea—the Sea of Azov. It was so big that when Olga looked at it her heart gave a little leap and she wanted to stretch out her arms to it.

A warm wind blew from the sea. It was so strong that everything rippled and moved—the leaves, the shutters on the windows, and the fishing nets, which were looped on pointed stakes down on the beach.

All the fishermen tipped their caps to Granny. She only pressed her lips together tighter and nodded to them from the carriage.

“Hullo, Varvara Stepanovna!” a man with a moustache called to her as he came out of a big wooden house. “So you’ve met your folks?”

The carriage drew up.

“The chairman of our kolkhoz,” said Granny to Mummy, nodding towards the man with the moustache.

Mummy quickly took off her glove, tipped her head to one side, and held out her hand. The man with the moustache took it in his big one and looked at her with an expression of wonderment. Olga’s mummy was very pretty. Olga knew it, and her mummy knew it, and now the chairman of Granny’s kolkhoz knew it.

“My granddaughter Olga,” said Granny turning to Olga.

“Say hullo, Olga,” said Mummy.

“Hullo, little girl!” cried the chairman in a deep bass voice, lifting Olga out of the carriage and holding her up so high that her thin legs dangled in the air.

Olga saw two big black eyes in front of her very nose peering out from under bushy eyebrows. The man’s shaggy grey moustache tickled her cheek.

“You don’t mean to say this is Konstantin’s daughter?” exclaimed the man in admiration. “I knew your daddy when he was only this high. A fine little fellow he was. He grew up to be one of your big-bugs, but I knew him when he was just a little shaver. Ah, me!” He sighed and put Olga down. “What makes her so skinny?” he asked.

“She’s been ill,” explained Mummy politely. “She had scarlet fever followed by inflammation of both ears.”

The chairman heaved a sigh.

“That’s nothing, she’ll grow well and strong here,” said Granny briskly, getting out of the carriage.

Mummy got out too, and was about to take her bag when Granny said, without turning her head:

“Sasha! Caught napping again?”

Sasha, who couldn’t have been more than twelve years old, came running up to the carriage and snatched the bag out of Mummy’s hand. Then he stood looking at Mummy, Granny, and Olga, with a grin from ear to ear, as if nothing could be more fun than to carry a big bag.

They all went into the house.

Up ahead walked Sasha with the big bag.

Granny lived in a nice house. It was not very big, but the walls were as white as sugar and it had trees growing all around it. In the middle of the yard stood a kennel, and inside the kennel lived a dog that began to growl softly.

"Quiet, Tuzik," ordered Granny as she walked past.

Tuzik stopped growling and Olga squatted down and held out her hand.

"Here Tuzik, here Tuzik!" she called.

"Such a little thing!" said the chairman.

Mummy, Granny, Olga, and the chairman went inside. Near a window hung with gauze curtains stood a table with an embroidered cloth on it. At the table sat an old woman. She was really old, not just elderly. She was little and fat, with soft white hair and soft white hands that fluttered as if anxious to fondle you.

"Manya," said Granny.

Manya got up and blinked her blue eyes amiably.

A samovar was steaming on the big table. A lot of bowls and jugs were standing on the embroidered squares of the table-cloth, and there were all sorts of good things in the bowls and jugs and on the plates.

"Sit down," said Granny, bowing low to Olga's mother. "You must be hungry, Zinaida."

Olga's mother blushed and returned the bow. Then she took off her hat self-consciously and sat down at the table.

Olga was seated between Mummy and Aunt Manya. They piled her plate high with all sorts of food—cheese-cakes, *pampushki* buns, and biscuits.

Olga nibbled shyly at a piece of cheese-cake and listened to what the grown-ups were saying. Granny and Aunt Manya asked Mummy what sort of journey she and Olga had had. Mummy, wishing to please, told them everything in great detail: at what time they had got up on the day they left, how they had driven to the airport, and how much the tickets had cost.

Olga grew bored and began swinging her leg and striking her heel against the chair.

"Tired?" asked Granny suddenly. "Go out and get some fresh air. That'll put life in you."

"Take your cheese-cake with you, ducky," said Aunt Manya, beaming at her. Olga took it, put on her cap and cape, and ran out into the garden.

There was a ring of bushes growing in the middle of the garden. They made a wonderful hiding-place. She could sit among their leaves without stirring for ever so long, and everyone would think she was lost.

The stiff shiny leaves gave off a spicy odour. A lady-bird was crawling slowly up one of the leaves, its red wings drooping as if it were weak from the heat. Gradually it spread its red wings and Olga could see another pair—transparent ones—underneath. She could also see its little black body, no bigger than the head of a pin. All of a sudden it flew away.

The air was full of a buzzing, a droning, and a chirping. A whining fly circled round Olga's head. A cock strutted up and down in front of the shed. He thrust out his long red neck, shuddered, grew perfectly still, and let out a noisy crow.

Gingerly Olga put her fingers on the rough trunk of a tree, then she threw her little arms round it. The bark was scratchy. Gum oozed out of the cracks.

"A tree," said Olga, as if she had never seen a tree before. Gently she stroked the sun-warmed bark. "You're even thinner than I am," she whispered. A sudden fit of shyness made her glance round to see if anyone could have overheard her.

No one. The only creature in sight was Tuzik, who had come out of his kennel to lie in the sun.

Olga slowly opened the gate and went out into the street. It was wide and dusty and led down to the sea.

Everything was still. From time to time loud cries came from the direction of the sea.

"Yoo-hoo!" someone called from the beach below.

"Hi-i!" someone replied from the bluff above.

Again everything was still. A wasp flew past, singing a song of summer. Suddenly Olga spied two little girls crouching behind the fence across the street.

As soon as they caught sight of Olga they got up and came out of the gate. One of them was Olga's age, the other a little older.

Olga stared at the girls and the girls stared at Olga.

They said nothing.

Then one of the girls, the smaller one, beckoned to Olga and made some motions Olga could not understand.

"What?" said Olga, running over to them. Her lace collar blew over her chin as she ran through the dust in her little red slippers. The wind from the sea pulled at her cape and shook the tassel at the end of her pointed red cap.

She stopped in front of the girls and glanced at them shyly.

"Look how she's dressed herself up!" whispered one of the girls, giving the other a little nudge.

"The cap! Look at the cap! A tassel hanging from her nose like a turkey," whispered the other.

"Wha-at?" gasped Olga.

"Turkey!" said the smaller girl out loud, pointing to Olga's cap.

"Turkey!" repeated the older girl, and both of them burst out laughing.

Olga stood staring at them without a word. She wanted to cry, but she couldn't. Dropping her head, she went home slowly—to Mummy and Granny.

"Have some raspberries, Olga?" said Mummy as she came up to the table. "I've taken the centres out for you."

Olga sidled up to Mummy with hanging head.

"What's the matter?" asked Mummy.

Olga didn't answer.

"Come, now, what's the matter?" asked Mummy again, putting down the plate.

Olga could see that Mummy was anxious.

"Turkey!" she whimpered.

"What's that?"

"They called me a turkey," said Olga even more softly, dropping her head even lower.

"For shame," said Mummy, taking Olga by the hand. "You don't want me to go out and make a row on your account, do you?"

"They've never seen anyone dressed up in city clothes before," explained the chairman apologetically.

"What?!" exclaimed Granny suddenly, as if she had just waked up. "Called you a turkey? Who? Who called you a turkey? Show me. The very idea! Tsch, tsck!" and her face broke out in red blotches.

Olga said nothing.

Granny pushed back her chair noisily and took her by the hand. She strode quickly out into the yard pulling Olga behind her.

She threw open the garden gate.

"Who called her a turkey?" she said, dropping Olga's hand.

Not a sound came from behind the fence across the street. Two flaxen heads were seen for a second above the weeds, but they instantly vanished.

"Just you wait!" called out Granny. Then she whirled round and strode just as quickly back into the house.

YOU PULLED MY HAIR!

Olga opened her eyes and looked at the ceiling.

There was a big patch of sunlight on the low ceiling, rippling across it in little waves. A breeze came through the open window, blowing out the starched curtains. The sounds of the street formed a steady, unfamiliar murmur.

It was very quiet. Suddenly a cock crowed under the window.

Olga squeezed her eyes shut, but she couldn't go back to sleep. She opened her eyes and looked at the chest of drawers. There was a lace runner on it.

What's that? How did it get here? she wondered.

But the next minute she remembered she wasn't at home. She was at Granny's.

"Mummy!" she called.

Mummy didn't come.

Aunt Manya came and bent over her, blinking in a friendly way.

"Mummy's asleep," she whispered. "Granny says not to wake her up. She's a thoughtful woman, your granny is, even if she never got any book learning. 'Let her have her sleep,' says she. 'They're city folk. They're not used to getting

up before eight, or even nine. Don't wake them up. Walk on tiptoe.' So here I am, creeping about on tiptoe since five o'clock. Didn't so much as open the windows. But if you've woke up of yourself, get up and get dressed. I'll give you some sour cream. You've never tasted sour cream to match ours. Get up, get up!"

Olga sat up and leaned out of bed to peer into the next room through the half-open door.

The shutters were still closed in the next room. A ray of light made its way through a crack between a shutter and the window. There was no Granny, but Olga could make out Mummy's hand with the familiar ring on it gleaming whitely against the blanket. A warm fragrance came from the dark room.

How light it was in Olga's room with the open window! Even the floor was warm and bright. Olga longed to run barefoot across the bright floor. She glanced at the door behind which Mummy was sleeping.

Better not—she may wake up, she thought. Mummy always wakes up when I do something I oughtn't.

With a little sigh, she pulled on her slippers.

When she had put on her dress she tried to fasten the buttons in the back, but her arms were too short. She stooped down to make herself smaller, but even so she couldn't reach the buttons. Well, it couldn't be helped, so she ran out into the garden with her dress unfastened.

Early morning. Not a soul in sight. A hot sun stared out of a bright blue sky. It rose higher and higher. It poured its heat down on the earth and the grass and the kennel in which Tuzik lay drowsing.

Sand. It would be fun to dig in it, thought Olga.

But she hadn't brought her spade.

For want of something better to do, she just sat down on the grass and thought. Gradually her unfastened dress slipped off her shoulders. There she sat thinking, one shoulder lifted, her lips parted, her thin hands clasped tightly.

What smells so nice? she thought. The wind, maybe. This isn't at all like being home—or like being in the country, either.

At last she got up and went to the gate. She opened it and looked out to see if the girls were there again. Without letting go of Granny's gate, she stepped out into the street.

On either side of the dusty road were white houses with white stoves in the yards. The roofs of the houses were made of rushes. Could roofs like that really keep out the rain?

She noted three boats lying on the slope that led down to the sea. For some reason they had been turned upside-down.

The bottoms of the boats were coated with tar. The tar was thick and black, and the bottoms of the boats were long and broad. A pile of nets lay beside the boats.

She saw a lace table-cloth hanging on a line in the yard across the street. The wind blew it down, and she saw that it wasn't a table-cloth at all, but a net—and what a big one! She had never seen a net that big before. She let go of the gate and set out across the street to get a better look at it.

Just then the two little girls who had called her a turkey the day before came out of the house.

This time Olga noticed that one of them—the larger one—had close-cropped red hair and a long face with a sharp chin. She looked like a fox.

The smaller one came trudging after the other on short fat legs. She had brown slippers on her feet.

On seeing Olga the smaller one stopped and opened her mouth.

Olga stared at the girls, and the girls stared at Olga.

They said nothing.

"What's your name?" the smaller girl asked suddenly.

"Olga."

"Mine's Sveta, and hers is Lida," volunteered the smaller one, screwing the toe of her slipper into the dust.

"Where do you come from? Far away?" asked the other girl, the one who looked like a fox.

"Leningrad," murmured Olga.

"Leningrad? And is Varvara Stepanovna your granny?"

"Yes," said Olga, drawing a deep breath.

Another pause.

"We're going swimming," said the smaller girl, still digging the dust with the toe of her slipper.

"May I go with you?" Olga asked boldly.

The girls exchanged glances.

"Hear that, now; the little precious is asking if she may go with you," came the voice of Aunt Manya from the door of Granny's house. "Asking, mind you. Why don't you answer?"

"Let her come," said the older girl with a shrug of her shoulders.

And so Olga went with them. Her red slippers pattered down the wide road, raising a cloud of dust at every step.

They came to the bluff overlooking the beach. The soil was slippery clay and there were no steps to help them climb down. From the top of the bluff they could see the beach and the sea.

"Me first!" cried Lida.

She held on to a bit of jutting rock, swung down on to a big stone, and jumped to the bottom.

"Who's next? You?" asked Sveta.

"Yes," said Olga.

She went bravely over to the rock, holding on to some weeds to keep from slipping, but they stung her fingers and she had to let go. The earth crumbled away under her feet.

"Pooh!" cried Lida, who was standing below. "You don't know how to climb at all!"

Olga was afraid to move; she stood clinging to a bush for all she was worth.

"Let go!" cried Lida.

"All right," said Olga.

"Let go with your hands!" cried Sveta.

Slowly Olga unclasped her fingers and squeezed her eyes shut in terror. She was falling!

No, she was gently sliding down. The crumbling earth carried her down along with the clumps of dirt.

"It's all over! You've landed!" called out Sveta.

Olga opened her eyes. She was standing on the beach.

In front of her stretched the sea. It was covered with little ripples that glittered so brightly she couldn't look at them. The sea seemed to be made of pure gold, and far out on the water were some little white dots. Lots and lots of them.

"What are they?" asked Olga.

"Those dots? Humph, everybody knows what they are," said Lida. "They're *baidas*."

Olga had never heard of a *baida* before. She wanted to ask what it was, but a glance at Lida's face told her she had better not. Just then a boat came round a bend in the cove. The boat was leaning hard to one side and the sail was blown so full it seemed about to burst. Swiftly it made its way out to sea. The further it went, the smaller its sail grew, until it, too, was nothing but a little white dot. So *that* was what a *baida* was!

"They've gone fishing," said Sveta, and, taking off her slippers and holding up her skirt, she waded into the water.

"Warm?" asked Lida.

It could not have been, because instead of just saying "Yes," Sveta shivered and said "Lovely."

Sveta and Lida began taking off their clothes and Olga stood and watched them.

"What are you standing there for?" asked Lida. "Come in with us. Nobody'll steal your clothes."

Olga took off her dress. Then her slippers. But she didn't go into the water. She remained standing on the warm sand. A shell cut into her heel. A wind from the sea blew over her. For a long time the wind had been travelling over the sea, and when it reached Olga it blew straight into her open mouth. She almost choked on it, but the next moment it had sped away over the beach, into the village, into Granny's garden, where it tugged at the shutters on Granny's windows.

"The sea's rough," said Lida as she walked into it.

She stooped down, cried "O—o—o!" and stretched out her arms with the palms of her hands pressed tightly together. Her hands cut into the waves like a knife, then separated and pushed the water behind her. She kicked her feet,

sending up great sprays of water. Soon she was quite a distance from shore. Olga could see nothing but her head with wet hair plastered down on it and white foam all around.

"Come and catch me!" cried Lida, turning over on her back. She lay in the water as if in bed. She didn't sink. She just lay there with the waves rocking her gently up and down.

"Li-i-da!" called Sveta who was standing rubbing one leg against the other. Then she too threw herself into the water. She thrashed about with her arms and legs, looked round to see if Olga were watching, spat and snorted. The water rose up in white spray all around her.

"Good-bye!" called Sveta and dived into the waves. One fat leg stuck up out of the water.

Open-mouthed, Olga watched Sveta's leg kicking in the air.

What fun they're having! she thought enviously. I'm afraid. But I don't want to be afraid. I want to have fun too.

She walked into the water determinedly. It was up to her ankles. It was so cold it made her catch her breath, but she felt unspeakably happy. She threw herself into the water and began waving her arms as Lida had done. She jumped up and down as Sveta had done. But all of a sudden there was no bottom!

Where's the bottom?!

There was no bottom.

"Help!" cried Olga. "Help! I'm drowning!"

And she was.

Her head was under the water and her arms were stretching up out of the water. Her fingers opened and closed of themselves, clutching the air. She gasped. She swallowed gallons of salt water.

No bottom.

Suddenly she caught sight of something yellow under the water. It was all vague and smeary, and it stretched out long tentacles to grasp her. What could it be?

Someone had heard her call for help and had come to rescue her.

"Mummy! Mummy!" sputtered Olga under the water. Bubbles rose up over her head.

Whoever had come to rescue her seized her by the hair. She tried to catch hold of that other person. She simply *had* to get out, to see, to breathe!

She struggled, she came to the surface, she sank again. But the invisible person held her firmly by the hair and dragged her on.

"Ouch! Let go!" cried Olga.

The person let go and she stood on her feet. Her mouth and nose were full of water. She sucked in the air through her mouth. She lifted up her arms, as if she were breathing with her arms.

When she had caught her breath she saw Lida. So it was Lida who had rescued her!

There was a foxy look on Lida's face. It was Lida who had dragged her out of the water. Dragged her by the hair. Perhaps she had done it on purpose—dragged her by the hair instead of the arms.

"Just think! You almost got drowned!" said Sveta. "Get out of the water—quick! Warm yourself in the sand!"

"No, I won't!" sputtered Olga. "Lida pulled me out by the hair!"

"What did you expect? To get pulled out by the heels?" said Lida in surprise. "Drowning people always get pulled out by the hair."

Lida saw that Olga had gone quite blue.

"Hurry out!" she said.

Olga just stood there spitting out salt water.

"You'll freeze!" said the frightened Lida. Seizing Olga under the arms, she carried her towards the beach.

"Let me go!"

But Lida paid no attention to her. She made for the beach with Olga kicking and struggling for all she was worth.

"You're hurting me!" cried Olga. "I'm not made of wood!"

"You almost got drowned," said Lida.

"You don't even know how to swim!" said Sveta, when Olga and Lida had reached the shore.

Olga was cold and miserable.

It's easy enough for them, she thought bitterly. I could swim too if the sea had come right up to my window in Leningrad. They live here. It's their sea. Suddenly she burst into tears.

"Such a . . . such a b-big girl. . . and to p-pull my hair!" she wept.

"I'll bet she'll run and tell her granny on me," said Lida, nudging Sveta.

"It's easy for you, it's your sea," wailed Olga, sitting down in the sand and pulling her dress over her wet shoulders.

There was sand in her hair, sand in her mouth, and sand between her toes. She rubbed her eyes with her fist and got sand in them, too.

Just then a big boat loaded with rushes drew up on the beach. The rushes gave off a slimy odour. An old man rolled up the legs of his trousers and stepped out of the boat.

"W-what does he want with those rushes?" asked Olga through her tears.

"What do you suppose? How would he heat his stove without rushes? Or don't they have any stoves where you come from?"

Olga was ashamed to say they really did not have any stoves in the houses where she came from. And no kennels in the yards, and no trees in front gardens, and no sea at the end of the street.

"We don't have stoves," she said, "but we have chimneys. And we have steam and furnaces. And a man who tends the furnace for a whole block of houses. And our house is seven stories high. And after the war they put new glass in all the windows. And we have gardens in the centre of town. And there's an iron fence around them, and monuments inside. There's even a monument to Grandad Krylov—the one who wrote the fable about the lap dog that barked

to scare the elephant. The fascists tried to hit it with a bomb, but they missed. He's sitting on a big stone, and he's got his cats and cocks and monkeys all around him, and there's a crane, too. Not a live one, of course—bronze, like the monument."

"You're fibbing," said Lida. "Who ever heard of putting up a monument to cats and cocks! Do you think we've never seen a monument? We've got a monument here, too. 'To Heroes of the Revolution.' It's got a flag on it. But no cats and cocks."

"We've got a Square of the Heroes of the Revolution," said Olga. "It's in the centre of town and it's got a big chain all around it."

"Pooh-pooh!" said Sveta with a wave of her pudgy hand.

"Fibbing again!" said Lida. "Who ever heard of a chain all around a square! How big is it?"

"As big as anything," said Olga. "You can ask my mummy if you don't believe me."

"I'll ask her, never fear!"

"Ol-ga!" cried Aunt Manya, appearing at the top of the bluff, holding on to the kerchief the wind was trying to carry away. "What has kept you so long, pet? Your mummy is in a dreadful state—runs about the garden crying you must be drowned, and I tell her it's a sin to say such things, why should the child get drowned? She's just playing somewhere, but it's time you was having your dinner. Dinner's waiting for you, ducky."

Olga looked up at the big rock and Aunt Manya with her flying kerchief and wind-blown hair, and all of a sudden she felt very hungry.

FISHING

Soon it would be three o'clock. How hot it was!

Olga, Sveta, and Lida were strolling along the sea-shore. They could hardly hear each other speak for the noise on the beach.

On a slope leading to the sea stood a ship as big as a house. It was covered with scaffolding.

Workmen were sitting on the scaffolding with their legs hanging down. There were so many of them that Olga thought all the men who lived in Granny's village must have come here and climbed up on the scaffolding. The men were hammering on the metal sides of the boat. The metal hummed and rang under their blows.

Twice in her life Olga had taken a steamboat ride on the Neva with her other Granny, Mummy's mother. But she had seen only the floors, the cabins, the railings, and the funnels of those boats. All the rest—the sides and bottom—had been under water.

But she could see the sides and bottom of this boat. The sides were rough and covered with barnacles that had fastened themselves to it as it sailed on the sea.

She stopped and looked round. Boards, kegs, beams, nails, and sheets of metal were scattered over the rock.

The section of rock on which the boat was lying was cut off from Granny's village by a high weather-beaten fence. In the spaces between the notches at the top of the fence she caught a glimpse of the roofs of some long sheds and the top of a big brick building with a tin roof and a big chimney. The chimney was puffing out smoke like a locomotive.

"What are you looking at?" asked Lida. "Haven't you ever seen a repair shop before?"

"Course I have," said Olga, turning away.

But of course she had not.

The girls watched the workmen a little longer, then walked on.

The noise was not so great now, and the further they walked, the less it became. Soon the steamboat covered with scaffolding was far behind them.

Far, faint, indistinct was the noise of the hammering. It seemed to Olga that it was the throbbing of the silence and the heat. The throbbing of the hot air and the hot sand.

How hot it was!

Lida, Sveta, and Olga sat down on a stone in the shadow of an overhanging cliff.

They could see a motor boat clipping through the water, sending waves billowing out on either side of it.

The two lines of waves were like the two sides of a long curly moustache. The boat disappeared. So did the watery moustache.

A long string of boats moved across the sea like a file of geese. They were so far away that they looked very small.

Down the sea they sailed, leaving a broad, wavy trail in their wake.

Then again the sea grew calm. It was as if the sea, too, felt hot. A thick motionless finger stuck up out of it. The finger was the tower of a dredger.

During the war the fascists had entered this cove. They had tried to take possession of the sea and the shore and the village—at least that was what Lida said. It was they who had damaged the dredger. It no longer brought sand and silt up from the bottom of the sea; it just stood there with its tower sticking up like a pointing finger.

"The things that went on then!" mused Lida. "Once after the fascists had run away Grandad Nikifor came down to the beach early in the morning and found three dead sailors, two of them officers, lying on the sand. Grandad ran back to the kolkhoz and told them all about it—how three sailors had got washed ashore. The women came running to see them—scared they might be relatives. But they weren't. They came from some other place. The women buried them over there, under those maples. They cried like anything. Called them their sons and heroes. Carried the coffins on their shoulders all the way. They buried them without even knowing their names. And to this day we don't know their names. They put a fancy fence round their graves and we kids put flowers on

them, and every summer Porchenko, who works at the storehouse, paints the fence."

Lida kept blinking her eyes and her eyebrows moved up and down as if they were trying to fly away.

"One of the boys from the Navy School dived down to the bottom of the sea," said Sveta. "They're going to repair the dredger, and he dived down to look at the bottom of it. You ought to see all the barnacles on it! Something awful!"

"It's dark under the water," said Olga. "How could he see them?"

"Simple enough. He just saw them, that's all."

"There's an old man lives under the dredge," announced Lida. "He's got hair hanging down to his feet, and crabs for fingers, and star-fish for eyes, and a reed for a nose."

"I don't believe it," said Olga.

"Oh, don't you?" retorted Lida. "Why don't you, smarty? Think there couldn't be an old man like that, but there could be a square with a chain all around it? Humph! You do know a lot! You'd better shut up!"

"I won't," said Olga, too lazy to get angry, though she felt she ought to. It was so hot!

As she glanced listlessly about her, she noticed the funnel of a boat rising into the clear air above a long wooden pier which jutted out into the sea. The funnel seemed to be drowsing in the suffocating heat. Drowsing beneath a cloudless sky.

Even the boat felt hot.

A jelly-fish lay in the sand, washed up by the sea. The jelly-fish was melting. Melting from the heat.

The little girls got up. Languidly they trailed, one after another, down the empty beach. There was not a soul to be seen. But suddenly Olga caught sight of a grey-haired man standing in a peculiar house that had no walls—only a wide roof made of rushes. The man was looking out to sea. He was wearing a white apron and a fisherman's hat. There was a big scale in front of him.

"He's the man who weighs the fish," said Sveta.

"He's horrid," said Lida. "He's always rowing somebody. Grandad Matveyich, the other weigher, is much nicer."

The horrid man didn't so much as look at the girls. He just stood there scratching the back of his head.

On the sand beside him lay an overturned boat. The bottom of it was smeared with tar. A fly had got caught in the sticky smelly black stuff. It beat its wings and buzzed loudly. The children felt sorry for it.

"Let's set it loose," said Sveta.

"Let's," agreed Olga.

They pulled its legs out of the tar.

As soon as it was loose it set to cleaning its legs by rubbing them against one another, bending them at the knee. Then it flew away.

The beach was very quiet at this spot.

The repair shop was far behind them. So was Granny's village.

A bird with dark wings and a white breast circled over their heads and gave long low cries. Some other big birds flew after it. They flew with their broad wings spread wide and their little heads thrust forward.

One of them had long legs and a long skinny neck. It was a heron. Its long skinny legs looked as if the stockings had been taken off of them. For a moment it came to rest on the beach, standing with its foolish little head cocked on one side in a sorrowful pose.

The wedge-shaped flock of birds rose over the pier and circled over the port and the drowsing funnels of the boats. Then they flew away.

Olga looked to see where they had gone. There was nothing to see.

Presently some little white specks appeared above the sea.

"They've come back!" cried Sveta.

"They've come back," whispered Olga.

The birds were flying low over the water. The entire sea seemed to be covered with white dots. The dots grew larger. They formed a white wing, a flock, a cloud. Olga saw that they were not birds at all. They were sails.

"The fishermen are coming back," said Lida.

There were lots and lots of boats. They came sailing over the smooth water.

Olga could see the men working in them. They were taking in the sails, which slid gently down on long ropes. The wind rippled the sails. They billowed out, trying to escape from the sailors' hands, but the next moment they dropped obediently into the bottoms of the boats.

The sails were down. They no longer helped drive the boats. Now the fishermen were pushing ahead with long poles.

When the first boat reached shore the children saw heaps and heaps of all sorts of fish in the bottom.

Some of the fishermen jumped into the water and pulled their boats up on the beach, others climbed back into the boats and carried out the rolled-up sails. They scooped the fish out with big shovels.

Now the beach was full of noise and commotion. People came running from all sides. How many people there were in Granny's village! They rushed about pushing, shoving, shouting.

"What did I tell you?" called out a woman as she rolled up her sleeves.

"They're coming," says I. "They're not," says he. "They are," says I. And that's how it went; first him, then me. . . ."

The village women brought enormous baskets with them, which the fishermen filled with fish.

"Here, weigh it!" the fishermen called to the man with the grey hair.

"When I'm ready," he replied.

The first two fishermen came up—strong, sturdy lads, burnt almost black by the sun. Between them they carried a great basketful of fish and put it on the scales. The weigher gazed calmly at the basket from under his big hat.

"Almost a hundredweight," he said grumpily, wiping his hands on his apron.

"Come, now, Trofimych, that's not fair," cried one of the fishermen. "It's more than a hundredweight. That's not fair!" and he pounded his chest with his fist.

The weigher also pounded his chest with his fist.

There they stood facing each other, pounding their chests with their fists.

"It's more!" cried the fishermen.

"It's less!" cried the weigher.

The beach was in a hubbub. One after another the boats came in.

All the fishermen, no matter how many arrived, threw the big slippery fish out of their boats on to the sand, or the wet grass, or into baskets.

The fish had whitish eyes and flat mouths with rows of sharp little teeth in them. They flipped about. They smelt of salt water and their scales glistened in the sun.

A crowd of little boys gathered round them.

They felt the fish, running their fingers over the sharp fins. The fish breathed hard, blowing their gleaming bellies out and in. One minute they lay still, the next they leapt up with their mouths open.

"Look! A white one!" cried Sveta, stroking the fish along its silvery back.

"Not a bad catch," said Lida, picking up one of the fish by its gills.

"Don't pick it up that way," said Olga.

"How else? In kid gloves?" scoffed Lida, tossing the fish away.

The fish beat the sand with its tail.

Lida squatted down beside a big grey net. The whole beach was strewn with nets.

"Hurry up, or the lubbers'll pick out all the fish," Sveta said to Olga.

Olga could not imagine what lubbers would pick out what fish, but she, too, squatted down.

"Don't get in the way!" cried Lida.

"I'm not in the way!" cried Olga.

Olga saw Lida, Sveta, and the little boys pulling fish out of the meshes of the nets. She wanted to do the same. First she lifted the net, then she seized a fish by its thin, flapping tail. It was very slippery.

She pulled on the fish, but the tail slipped out of her fingers.

"That's not the way," said Sveta. "Hold it this way."

Olga held it "that way" and cut her finger on a sharp fin. Blood showed.

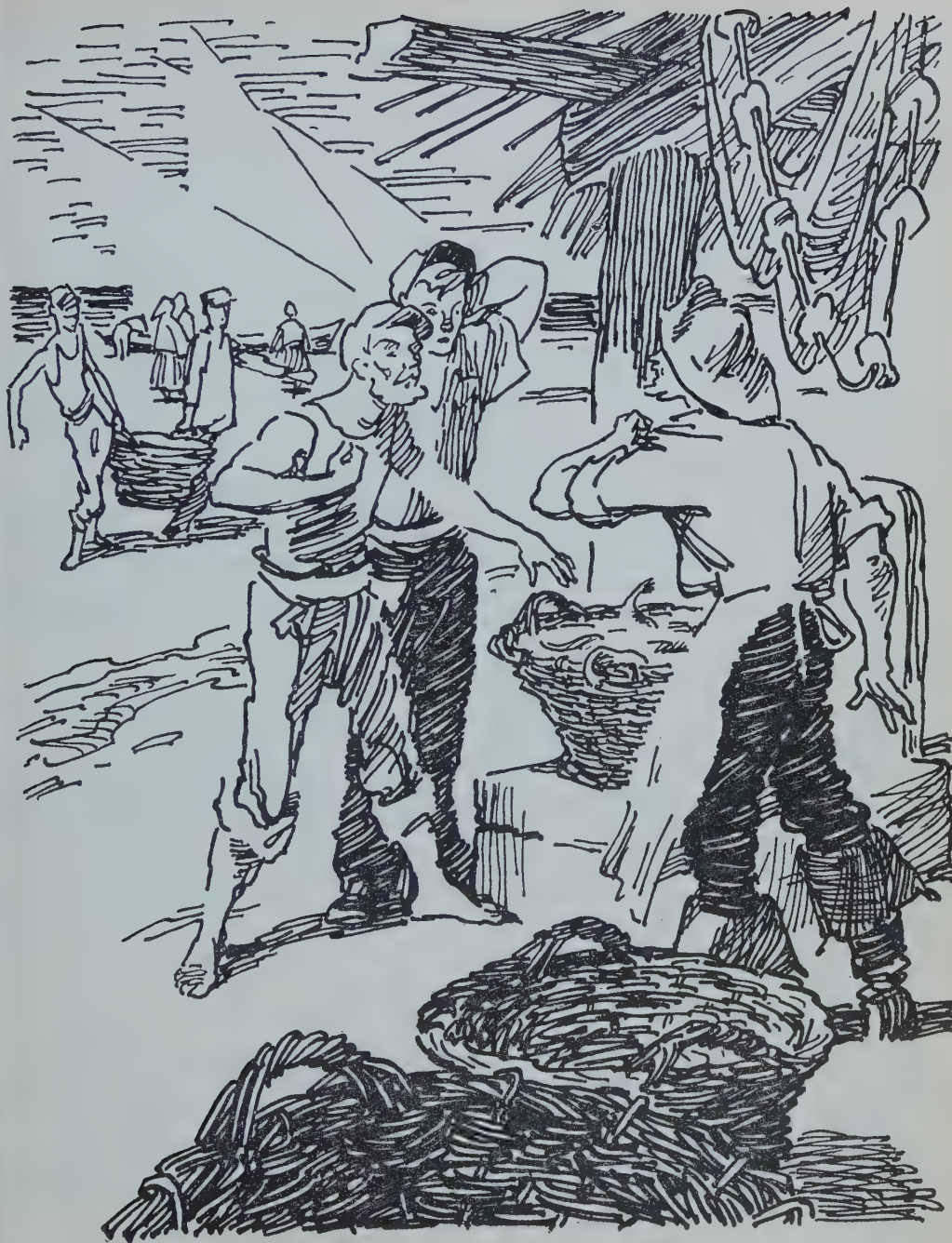
"What a little stupid you are!" said Lida.

"I'm not, I'm not!" cried Olga. "I cut my finger!"

She watched Lida out of the corner of her eye. She could not help admiring her speed and skill. Lida seized the struggling body in one hand and gently pressed down the gills with the other.

The fish slipped out of the net as if it had been soaped.

She's lucky, hers is a different sort of fish, thought Olga, sucking her finger.



After a moment's consideration she selected a big fish and carefully pressed down the gills. But this fish seemed to have special gills. It was still breathing, and it wriggled out of her hand.

"How many have you got?" asked Sveta.

Olga saw that Sveta and Lida each had a pile of squirming fish beside her. Olga had only one fish.

"Look! Look! See how many she's got!" cried Lida, pointing at Olga's lone fish with the crushed gills.

All the little boys turned to look at Olga's fish. One of them, a little fellow in a checked shirt, gave a loud laugh. He himself had picked five fishes out of the nets.

Olga got up without a word and walked away.

When all the fish had been picked out of the nets, the boys dumped them into a basket and carried them over to be weighed.

It's easy for them, thought Olga sadly as she sucked her finger. But just wait, I'll learn soon, and then I'll pick out all the fish in the sea, all by myself, with nobody to help me. We'll see who'll laugh then!

She sniffed and kept muttering to herself: "We'll see who'll laugh then!" "She'll tell Granny again, you'll see," whispered Lida.

"Isn't that Varvara Stepanovna coming?" cried someone on the beach.

Granny! thought Olga with a sigh, gazing in the direction of Granny's house. But Granny was nowhere to be seen.

A lone boat was sailing over the water, and for some reason everybody was saying:

"Looks like Varvara Stepanovna is coming."

Everybody sees her but me, thought Olga, turning in every direction. That must be because I'm a little stupid.

The lone boat was a very big one, and by this time its pointed mast and wide sail could be plainly seen. You could even see a man in the boat.

He had on a wide oilskin hat and an oilskin jacket and trousers. The trousers were rolled up over his bare feet and muscular calves. He jumped into the water and helped the other fishermen pull the boat up on shore.

"Altogether—heave!" he shouted in a hoarse, strained voice.

When the boat was secure, his hat fell off and long grey hair fell down over his face.

Olga stood with her mouth hanging open. The man was Granny!

"Granny!" she gasped.

"So this is where you are!" said Granny. "How did you get here? Who gave you permission?"

"Not Aunt Manya," said Olga quickly. As soon as she had said it she clapped a hand over her mouth, afraid she had blundered.

Fortunately Granny did not hear her. She was glaring at the weigher.

"Well?" she shouted.

"Everything's ship-shape, Varvara Stepanovna," he said, wiping his hands on his slimy apron.

"I'll show you ship-shapel" she cried in a voice as frightening as when she had said "Just you wait!" to the little girls. "Short-weighing my team, are you? Think you can do what you please when I'm out at sea?"

"Come, now, Varvara Stepanovna," said the weigher.

He seized the enormous basket of fish brought by the fishermen from Granny's boat and, pushing the men away, lifted it up on to the scales single-handed.

How strong he is! thought Olga. It takes two or three to lift a basket that size, and he did it alone. How can such a strong man be afraid of Granny?

She stole a look in Granny's direction. She was standing with her hands on her hips, her oilskin hat on the back of her head, shouting to a youthful fisherman:

"Hey, Stepan! Sort the fish properly—properly, I tell you!"

Granny's voice was so loud and imperious that Stepan instantly bent over the basket and the fish began flying out from under his fingers.

"Properly, I said," shouted Granny again. "You're good when it comes to fancy dancing, but when it comes to work. . . . Sort them, I tell you! What's that mackerel doing among the small fry?"

Stepan looked as if he were about to cry.

Granny frowned and gave him a little push and took his place at the basket. The sleeves of her jacket were rolled up above the elbow, and she thrust her bare arms into the heap of fish that looked like a heap of silver.

She was covered with fish scales. She had silver arms and silver legs. Even her grey hair was flecked with silver. She looked like a Christmas tree that had been sprinkled with artificial snow.

A tall fisherman standing beside Olga turned to his companion.

"She don't so much as look at me," he whispered. "One of the men told her he saw me buying vodka on a work-day, and she's snubbed me ever since. And it was all a lie, strike me dead! The things people say!"

As Olga listened to him she thought of how her Granny had taunted Stepan with fancy dancing, and how the weigher had showed off his strength in front of her, and she thought: When Mummy goes away I'll be left all alone with her. What'll happen to me? She's so cross!

Meanwhile her cross granny was bending over the basket, tossing back her scale-flecked hair as she sorted the last of the fish. She said: "Sort them according to *kind*, not to *size*."

When the last fish was sorted, she wiped her face on her sleeve and pushed back her hat.

YOU'RE A VINEYARD YOURSELF!

"Mummy!" cried Olga, and woke up.

The window was wide open. Flies came buzzing in from the yard, circling in the warm rays of the sun.

Aunt Manya was leaping about with a kitchen towel in her hand. Her heels clattered noisily over the floor as she rushed about waving the towel.

The frightened flies swooped up and came to rest on the ceiling.

"Look at that, now!" exclaimed Aunt Manya, throwing back her head to stare at them.

"Why are you dancing so early in the morning, Aunt Manya?" asked Olga in surprise.

"Dancing? I'm not dancing. I'm chasing flies," said Aunt Manya.

She threw her towel down on a stool, went over to the window, and leaned far out.

"It must be going to rain," she said. "It surely must."

Now that she had stopped chasing flies, a whole crowd of them came in at the window and buzzed round her head.

"Your mummy's gone away, precious," said Aunt Manya, gazing up into the blue sky and flapping her arms like wings. "Went away at six o'clock in the morning, soon as she got up." Aunt Manya gave another wave of her arms. "They say a summons come for her. Out of a blue sky. Took a car and drove off to catch the airyoplane."

Olga sat up in bed. She had not quite grasped what had happened.

"A summons?" she asked in a frightened voice.

"Yes, a summons, dear, a summons," said Aunt Manya with a consoling nod.

"An instructor from the Fish Trust come in a car. Come to take her himself. And quite right—such a lovely woman and a captain's wife at that! So he should. In she comes and stands looking and looking at you—looking and looking, but she hadn't the heart to wake you up. She just gives a little wave of her hand and goes out. Your Granny went to see her off. Natural she wants to give her daughter-in-law a good send-off. Who knows if they'll ever see each other again? Just look at them devils, a-buzzing and a-flying!" Aunt Manya gave a little jump and struck the wall with her towel. "Believe it or not, precious, but I spent the whole night baking pies. Scarce could pack them into two boxes. Lovely boxes they was — left over from the fish we shipped off in the spring." Again Aunt Manya swung up her towel. "Your mummy didn't want to take them, 'What am I to do with so many?' says she. 'It'll take me no more nor an hour in the airyoplane from Krasnodar to Sochi,' says she. But your granny was hurt, so she took them."

Aunt Manya swung her towel for the last time and banged the window shut.

Olga looked at the old woman's flushed tired face.

"Flew away? What do you mean?" she whispered. "It's very funny. Not even to say good-bye . . . on account of a summons . . ."

She dropped her feet over the edge of the bed. Her lips and fingers kept moving noiselessly.

Gone away? How . . . ? Where . . . ? And without saying a word? Olga could hardly breathe. She pressed her lips together as tightly as she could to keep back the tears. Her lips were dry and had a bitter taste.

"The very image of your granny!" exclaimed Aunt Manya in delight. "The very image! As if she'd had her picture took!"

Olga stood up and began to dress slowly.

As if in a daze she washed her face and hands at the wash-stand, drank a glass of cream and ate a bun. When she had sorrowfully wiped the crumbs off her mouth (and a tear off her cheek) she began to look for her cap and cape.

They were nowhere to be found.

"Aunt Many," said Olga at last, "where are my cap and cape?"

"Your granny put them away in her trunk," replied Aunt Many. "Put them there soon as your mummy was gone. 'Too stingy to sew sleeves in her little girl's coat,' says she. Your granny'll make you a nice warm jacket and hat. Better than those ones. She's not stingy, your granny ain't."

Olga dropped her head and went out into the garden.

Went away just like that! she thought. Because of a summons!

This odd new word sounded so sad that a lump rose in her throat.

"Who knows if they'll ever see each other again?" she repeated Aunt Many's words to herself. And just when she had promised to spend the whole morning with me! Promised to take me to the station! She fibbed to me. And was afraid to look me in the face—that's why she went off without saying good-bye.

Such were the bitter thoughts that passed through Olga's mind.

And all the while something big and strong was heaving and beating like her own heart. It was the sea.

I'm all alone, she thought. She's gone away and left me.

She glanced round, she threw herself on the ground beside Tuzik's house, she burst into tears.

The earth and the grass smelt of something very delicate and unfamiliar, something that had been watered by the rains, warmed by the sun, and fanned by the salt winds that were forever rushing from place to place.

Tuzik came out. His chain clinked as he walked. He wagged his tail and sniffed Olga's foot.

Olga put her arms round him.

He was glad. He lay down, stretched out his shaggy head, and closed his eyes.

"There's only the two of us now, Tuzik. We've been left behind," wept Olga.

Suddenly two flaxen heads appeared from behind Granny's barn like the toy woodpeckers that jump up out of the box when you open the lid.

"Hi!" whispered Lida. "Can you hear?"

"Uh-huh," murmured Olga through her tears.

"A cart with the book-keeper in it is going down to the vineyard," said Lida in a loud whisper. "The grapes are ripe. Have you heard?"

"Uh-huh," murmured Olga.

"Let's follow the cart," said Sveta.

"Uh-huh," said Olga.

Lida and Sveta jumped out from behind Granny's barn, looked about them fearfully, threw themselves down on the grass, and crawled over to the fence. With a last look round, they squeezed themselves between the boards of the fence.

I never knew you could crawl through that chink, thought Olga. How nice! And she crawled after Lida and Sveta.

Lida, Sveta, and Olga took hands and ran down the wide road, kicking up clouds of dust as they went.

"Hoo-ray!" cried Sveta.

"Hoo-ray!" cried Lida.

"Hoo-ray!" cried Olga. "Hoo-ray!"

A long broad wind ran beside them down the road of Granny's village. It whistled in their ears. It shook a tree in a neighbour's garden. It blew out Olga's dress. It was on both sides of the road. It was everywhere. One moment it whisked the dust of the road into a whirlwind, the next it sprayed it out in a long ribbon.

A long wind. A broad wind. A crawling wind. A flying wind. Round and round it whirled in front of them.

No, it was not the wind spinning round. It was the wheels of a cart.

The cart was jouncing over the dusty road.

"Hurry!" cried Lida.

"Hurry!" cried Sveta.

"Hurry!" cried Olga.

"Hurry, hurry!" cried the wind whistling in Olga's ears. Lida, Sveta, and Olga held hands and ran as fast as they could to catch the cart up. They ran without taking their eyes off the revolving wheels. They ran with all their might.

The cart went faster and faster, but seemed sorry to do so. The girls, too, went faster and faster.

The cart turned a corner. A man sitting beside the driver cast a leisurely glance behind him. He caught sight of Lida, Sveta, and Olga.

Their feet and faces were covered with dust. They were holding tightly to one another's hands and running in a row, like three horses in harness.

They were out of breath.

"What's this?" said the man with a chuckle. "Perhaps we're bound for the same place? Can you be going to the vineyard too? Climb up. Perhaps I'll take you with me. Take you in the cart the whole way."

The children stopped, dropped their eyes, and nudged one another.

The man pulled on the reins.

"Climb up!" he said.

Lida and Sveta put one foot on the axle of the wheel and leapt up lightly. They pulled Olga up behind them.

The cart set off. A gold ear-ring glittered in the driver's ear. Mitrich! thought Olga happily.

The cart advanced over the soft dusty road, jolting over the stones. The rattle of it made the children come running out of the houses to stand at the fences and stare at the cart, Lida, Sveta, and Olga.

The cart went on, trailing a cloud of dust behind it.

It went past the white houses and the wells.

It went past the big grey building with the columns in front of it and the sign saying, "Latest Film *Air Taxi*."

"When we come back we'll go to the pictures," panted Sveta who was sitting on the edge of the cart, swinging her legs over the side.

"It's a nice house," said Olga with a shy glance at Lida.

"A house! Do you think that's just a house? It's the Club House," said Sveta.

But they had passed it by this time and reached a little green house with a square sign reading "Bank." Then they went past a large square, the market, a bath-house, and a white building bearing the sign: "Naval School."

The cornice of the school building was decorated with fancy stone triangles that looked like tiny balconies wreathed in ivy.

How pretty Granny's village is! thought Olga. It's like a big town. It's even nicer than a big town. A big town has nothing but big buildings in it; here there's wind and grass besides. In Granny's village grass and flowers grow out of every inch of ground. Over there, for instance—those little yellow flowers under that window. And that smoke streaming out in the wind.

"Where's that smoke coming from? Is there a fire?" whispered Olga.

"No," replied Lida curtly. "It's coming from the smoke house. Can't you smell the smoked fish? They cure fish there, too."

It was a big building. Its doors stood wide-open. Through the doors came the smell of fish and salt.

A woman in a white apron was bending over a barrel near the door. Her sleeves were rolled up. Salt and fish scales glistened on her strong arms and hands.

Further away were lines of little ditches stretching out like garden furrows. The water had not quite dried up in them.

"Look. That's where they breed fish," said Sveta giving Olga a poke in the ribs. "See those ponds? They bring fish from the sea and put them there. Little fishes."

"Why aren't there any fish in the ditches now?" asked Olga with a timid glance at Lida.

"Because they're put there in the spring," laughed the man on the cart. "But when they grow up they're let back into the sea to spawn. It's summer now, so there's no fish in the ponds."

Granny's little fishes had a pretty house to live in. Willow-trees with branches trailing the ground stood above a dried-up pond. A weathercock turned in the wind on the roof of the house.

The stream of yellow smoke blown out by the wind grew broader and thicker. There was a sound of thumping in the air. Olga supposed it came from the earth.

Slowly the cart circled round a wharf.

A steamboat, hauled up on dry ground and encircled by a high fence, lay in scaffolding.

Some dogs came running after the cart. They sniffed at the trail it left in the dust. It smelt of axle grease. They were disappointed. They knew that smell. Yawning, they turned and jogged home.

Now there were fields on either side of the cart. They were yellow with sun-flowers.

Soon the fields changed from yellow to green and were covered with stiff bristles that made them look like enormous brushes. The bristles were stalks of ripening maize.

"Look," said the man sitting beside Mitrich. "Just see what good weather means! Last year, when there was lots of rain, there were five or more heads to a stalk. This year there hasn't been much rain and there's only three on the average. But look at the size of them! Each is the size of two."

"Not a bad crop," murmured Mitrich indifferently.

But the man in the cart was in a talkative mood.

"Where are you from, little girl?" he asked Olga. "I don't seem to have seen you before."

"She's from Leningrad—Varvara Stepanovna's granddaughter," put in Sveta hurriedly. She was afraid the man might change his mind and say: "Stop the horse, Mitrich! What are these kids doing here? We've given them enough of a ride."

"She's from Leningrad—come to visit her grandmother," Sveta repeated, glancing at the man out of the corner of her eye.

"So that's it," he said as he took Olga in. "So you're Varvara Stepanovna's granddaughter, are you? Konstantin's daughter?"

"Yes," said Olga.

"Why didn't you say so in the first place?" said the man with a sudden smile. "That means you come from these parts too. Your father got to be a captain, but he and I used to play together. Both of us born in the Kuban."

He became lost in thought, and Sveta found this reassuring. She pulled up her legs, which were hanging uncomfortably over the side, and lay down in the cart.

The cart now bumped over the ruts, now rolled smoothly over the dusty road. It was bound for the vineyards. They rode past the railway station with its platform covered by a low wooden roof, past a little house, past low shrubbery, past some olive-trees that formed a sort of trestle at the very edge of the road, past some flowering fields and a lone little hut made entirely of rushes. The old man who acted as watchman over the fields lived in this hut. There he was standing beside a ditch overgrown with wild flowers, gazing at them from under the brim of his shaggy, pointed hat. The brim hung down exactly like the roof of his hut.

Soon they caught sight of the rush roof of a house with vines twining round the chimney. Mitrich made straight for it. When they got there he pulled on the reins and the cart stopped with a jolt.

"Here we are!" said Mitrich. "Climb out!"

How stiff Olga's legs were after riding so long! Pins and needles ran from her heels to her head at every step she took, and there was a ringing in her ears. If only she could have gone riding on and on!

"They've come!" cried someone from inside the house. "The book-keeper's come!"

Presently an old man came out. He was wearing narrow black trousers and a blue naval coat such as Olga's father wore. A ring glittered on one of his fingers, but he was barefoot.

"Ah, Lukich, Lukich!" said the book-keeper, clicking his tongue. "You're holding up plan fulfilment. Why didn't you deliver the grapes?"

"So they've remembered us at last!" said the old man with a sly twinkle in his eye. "Here was I wondering and wondering. . . ."

The book-keeper frowned and went into the house. The old man shuffled along behind him, leaving the little girls alone in the middle of the road.

A gander hopped out of a puddle and flapped his wings. His wife waddled up to him with a string of yellow goslings behind her. Then two little colts came running up. A fragrance was wafted from the fields—the fragrance of rain, perhaps, or of dust, or of new-mown hay.

"I wish we could go to the vineyard," said Sveta.

As if in answer to her wish, the barefoot old man and the book-keeper came out of the house.

"Come along, kids," said the old man. "We'll show you the vineyard. Have you ever seen it before?"

"No," said Sveta.

Down the path they went, single file. They went past a big field planted in water-melons, and another planted in tomatoes.

Little yellow burrs caught at Olga's dress.

A tiny house on long poles rose high over the fields, reaching up almost to the sky. It was the watchman's box. A little boy in an army cap was sitting in the doorway dangling his legs.

"The watchman's son," said Sveta. "Think of living in the middle of a vineyard," she added with a sigh of envy.

So this was the vineyard!

To right and left stretched long corridors of weeded paths. The walls of the corridors were formed of grape-vines held up by taut wires.

Barefoot girls with pruning shears in their hands were walking down the paths. They snipped off bunches of grapes and laid them in big baskets.

The foreman stood at the scales, keeping a sharp eye on all that was going on about him.

One of his eyes was bigger than the other, and that gave him a very cunning look.

"Treat our visitors, girls," he said.

"Let them help themselves," said the girls.

They brought an enormous wooden bowl—the sort women wash clothes in—filled to the very top with grapes.

"Fall to, kids," said the book-keeper, turning his back.

It was very hot. Flies and gnats were swarming about, but that did not keep the little girls from sitting down and pulling the cool grapes off the bunches.

In the distance could be heard a humming sound, thin and long-drawn.

It was the hum of summer. The silence was humming. The earth, the sunflowers, the birds and flies.

The yellowish grapes glistened like glass among the green leaves of the vines.

Olga got up and went down the path. Stooping down, she shyly touched a bunch of grapes with her forefinger.

"Is that the bunch you want?" said one of the grape-pickers, bending over Olga. "Does that one look the sweetest?"

The girl snipped the stem with her scissors. The heavy bunch fell on the ground.

"Why didn't you catch it?" asked the girl. "You saw me cutting the stem."

Olga glanced up at the girl. Her face was smeared with something white, like a clown's.

"What are you staring at?" laughed the girl. Olga could see that her cheeks were red under the white smear, and her teeth were even whiter. "Shall I smear your face for you, too, to keep you from getting sunburnt? You blessed little doll!"

The girl looked at Olga's thin legs showing under her short dress, and at her little red slippers.

"A doll for sure!" said the girl putting her shears in her pocket and taking Olga in her arms. "Maybe you'd like some water-melon or a cucumber?" she said in Olga's ear.

"No, thank you," said Olga.

"Look, I've found a doll!" cried the girl with the whitened cheeks, breaking into a loud laugh. "A real live doll, look!"

The girls came from other parts of the vineyard to crowd round Olga.

"Whose daughter are you?" they asked.

"Nobody's," said Olga.

"She's Suchov's daughter," said Sveta. "She's the granddaughter of Varvara Stepanovna, the team leader."

The girls glanced at one another.

"Oh, Suchov," said one.

Olga looked round at the vineyard from where she sat perched on the arm of the girl smeared with white. She could see the entire vineyard from there, with all its paths and corridors. She could see the trees of a young orchard next to the vineyard. She could see an enormous press with a long wooden handle. A woman was turning the handle, and grape juice was pouring into a pail. Next to the pail stood a barrel with metal hoops round it.

How nice it is here! thought Olga. What a big barrel! How good it smells! And what pretty scalloped leaves!

The book-keeper walked through the vineyard with the foreman and the bare-foot old man at his heels. He smiled as he gazed round at the vineyard.

I wish I could live here like the watchman's little boy, thought Olga. I'd walk up and down the paths, snipping the grapes.

The sky was red. The sun drew a fine line of light over the wide-spread fields.

Gradually the shadows lengthened. A ray of sun fell full on a bunch of grapes. The light went straight through each berry, and each of them shone forth



like a tiny lantern with a candle inside. One by one they went out. The red sky squeezed out a drop of bright colour on a bush by the roadside.

"Time to go," said the book-keeper.

And they all went back to the hut where the barefoot old man lived.

"Better to spend the night here than drive back in the dark," said the old man, pausing in front of his house.

"Dark!" scoffed the book-keeper. "Call this dark? It's still daylight."

He climbed up on the cart. The little girls climbed up too.

"Just a minute! Just a minute!" called the old man. "Almost forgot, cabbage-head that I am!"

He ran into the house and came back with a basket covered with big leaves.

"Here, give this to your granny," he said to Olga. "Let her see what sort of a harvest we have this year. Tell her it's from her old friend Lukich."

"Thank you," said Olga, taking the basket carefully out of his big sunburnt hands.

She lifted a corner of one of the leaves and peered inside.

Firm glossy grapes lay among soft leaves.

The cart set off.

Slowly, as if sorry to leave, it rolled down the road which was glowing in the last rays of the setting sun. Bushes stood out against the sky.

The sun sank lower and lower. Now only a tiny rim of it could be seen where the earth met the sky.

A mother-horse, whinnying gently, ran after a little colt that had become lost. The colt cried "Ee-ee! Ee-ee!" as it leapt over the soft grass on thin and shaky legs.

"Ee-ee!" it cried, lifting up its long face.

"Ee-ee!" answered its mother.

Dark. Darker. Utterly dark.

"Is it true," said Sveta to the book-keeper, "that a she-wolf lives in the fields here?"

"What's that?" said the book-keeper with a little start. He had been dozing. "A she-wolf? Yes, indeed. Didn't you know that?"

A scare-crow waved its long ragged sleeves in the breeze. It had a fisherman's hat on its head.

The stars came out. The fields were so dark that not even the sunflowers and maize could be seen. Fire-flies glowed softly among the grass.

The cart rolled on over the long, broad, dark road.

The little girls began to feel cold. There was nothing but darkness all around.

They drove on and on. The little girls huddled together and began to drowse off. So did the book-keeper and Mitrich, the driver.

Olga fell asleep and dreamed of the barefoot old man Lukich, with a head made of cabbage leaves and with grass and daisies sprouting out of his shoulders.

Suddenly she woke up.

They had reached the houses on the outskirts of Granny's village. She knew it by the uneven chain of lights stretching through the darkness. She could even

see the white blur of the nearest houses. Electric lights shone through the white curtains at the windows.

"Look, there's your house," said Sveta.

Olga saw that the shutters of Granny's house were open. Someone was walking about the room. A black shadow went back and forth across the window. It was Aunt Manya's shadow. The gate was bolted.

On hearing the cart approach, Tuzik ran out of his kennel. Tipping his shaggy head to one side in a sorrowful way, he let out a long and plaintive howl.

"Please stop here," said Olga. "This is Granny's house."

"Put her down," said the book-keeper.

"Good night," said Olga as she picked up her basket of grapes. "Thank you."

"So you liked the grapes, did you?" said Mitrich with a little chuckle. "I should think you did!"

He clicked his tongue and the horses started up.

"Granny, Gra-a-n-ny! Look what I've brought you from your old friend Luchich!" called Olga as she opened the gate.

She held the basket up to the lighted window. She waved her hand. She was fairly bursting with excitement.

"Look, Granny, look! I didn't ask for them. He sent them himself. A present," she shouted from the porch, swinging the basket and opening the door.

Aunt Manya and Granny came running towards her.

"Here she is!" said Aunt Manya. "Poor little lambkin!"

"Found!" said Granny. "Just you wait!" she said, taking Olga by the hand. "Just you wait! Just you wait!" she whispered over and over. Her hand was shaking.

They went into the room and Granny collapsed on a stool. She stared at Olga without winking and kept Olga's hand locked in her own big rough one.

"Where were you? Tell the truth! I'll find out anyway," said Granny, bending close to Olga's face.

The light hurt Olga's eyes and she kept blinking.

"Where were you? Out with it!" said Granny, striking the table with a bony finger.

"At the vineyard," whispered Olga, putting the basket on the floor.

"And it never entered your head that your old granny would rush round the village like a mad woman looking for you?" said Granny, straightening up. "It never entered your head that your mother put me in charge of you? Answer me that! You're not such a little child; you know your letters. Indeed you know too much for your age. Where's your sense? You've been spoiled by your mother and father, that's what! But I'm not your mother or father! I'll put things straight!"

Granny stretched out a long thin arm and Olga looked to see what she was pointing at. She saw a strap hanging on the wall.

"That's what I taught your father with," said Granny hoarsely, "and don't think I won't teach you, too, my fine girl!"

Olga said nothing. She pulled her hand out of Granny's.

Could it be that her granny had taught her daddy with that old strap? Her daddy, in his uniform with the gold buttons? Surely that was impossible.

Olga put two fists to her eyes. She was crying.

For some time Granny said nothing. Aunt Manya was sniffing near the door.

"Come, come," said Granny at last. "Enough of that. Have you had anything to eat?"

But Olga went on crying.

"Come, come," said Granny again. "Why, I can't say a word to you. What do you think—that you can order your granny about? Oh no, my dear; that'll never be."

Still Olga went on crying.

"Stop crying, do. Make up her bed, Manya," said Granny.

But Olga could not stop crying.

Granny walked back and forth. There was something hesitating, something apologetic in the way she walked.

"Your mother left you a note," she said in a trembling voice, without looking at Olga. "Here, read it."

Olga took the note in salty wet fingers.

She cried as she read. She stood near the lamp, holding up Mummy's note written in big printed letters. The letters doubled up and stood on their heads.

"Mummy! Dearest Mummy!" wept Olga.

And Olga's mummy answered her in big printed letters: "My own precious darling!"

Olga could not see anything else for her tears.

VARVARA STEPANOVNA'S GRANDDAUGHTER

The next morning Olga was wakened by feeling somebody looking at her.

It was Granny.

"Manya," she was whispering, "why don't you comb the child's hair? Look, it's all matted. What are we to do, cut off her plaits? I'd be ashamed to face her mother if I did such a thing. And then it'd be a pity to cut off such hair; just see how soft and pretty it is!"

Olga had been sure her granny never felt pity for anybody or anything. She pretended to be fast asleep.

She needn't try to make up to me, she said to herself, burying her face in the pillow. I'll run away anyway—yes, I will! Then Daddy'll write her a letter asking what she has done to me. Oh, Mummy!

Olga felt Granny's big hand fall gently on her head. It passed tenderly over her hair a few times, then paused, motionless.

Granny stood beside Olga's bed for a little while. Then she opened one of the drawers of the chest and took out a pair of rubber boots. She put them under her arm and went outside in her bare feet so as not to wake Olga up.

"Can't sleep any more, pet?" said Aunt Manya, bending over her.

Olga sat up and looked out of the window.

The sky was dark. Rain was falling.

"Get up, child, and have some sour cream," said Aunt Manya. She combed Olga's hair and brought her a pair of cheap new slippers and a coarse grey coat.

So this is the new coat she said Granny would buy me! thought Olga as she put it on. The sleeves of the coat were too long.

"That's all right," said Aunt Manya. "You'll grow into it. Granny chose a big one so's you could grow into it. A fine coat, ducky."

Olga glanced in the looking-glass and did not recognize herself in the coarse grey coat.

She went out into the yard and called Tuzik.

Tuzik didn't recognize Olga either. He crawled back into his kennel to get out of the rain.

Olga looked up into a plum-tree. Big drops fell off the leaves on to her face and shoulders. The coat got wet.

Olga went inside, sat down at the window, and gazed out into the street.

She saw the sea, and it seemed to be leaping up, as if trying to clear the bluff and rush down the street. She could hear the shutters banging against the house. Everything, it seemed, had been turned into rain, into flowing streams and swirling puddles. The rain barrels in the yards of the houses were overflowing. The roofs were dark and shiny with rain, and the boughs of the trees were sagging with rain.

Everything was moving. Everything was splashing and gurgling. Wet leaves flapped in the wind. The rain was beating on them from all sides.

The wind howled in the chimney.

Olga listened to the howling of the wind, the beating of the rain on the pane, and the banging of doors and shutters.

"What a dreary day, Aunt Manya!" said Olga. "Can't you tell me a story?"

"I used to know a lot of stories when I was young, child," said Aunt Manya. "But they've all got tangled up in my head with age. Well, sit down—here, on the bench, and I'll try to remember something, pet."

Olga sat down beside Aunt Manya.

Both of them looked out of the window.

"What rain!" said Aunt Manya. "That's why the flies came swarming in. A sure sign that rain was coming. Don't need the radio to tell you that. Time was, pet, when nobody ever heard of a radio. Those days my father and grandad caught the red-finned flounder and salted it so's its flesh was salty and its bones was not, and strung it through its nose and its tail and hung it from the ceiling. In rainy weather the flounder'd turn its nose ever so slight to where the wind was blowing from, and when the weather was fine the nose would turn itself back, meaning the wind was from the other side, and if a storm was on the way the flounder'd shake all over like it had the ague. Nowadays people don't believe in such signs. They've got the radio nowadays. The work of fishing folk is full of learning nowadays, but when my dad and grandad went to sea, it was the flounder told them

the weather. They'd catch the red-finned flounder, salt it so 's its flesh was salty and its bones was not, dry it in the sands of the shore. . . ."

"But you've told me that already," said Olga. . . ."

"So I have, so I have, pet," said Aunt Manya, and fell to gazing at the rain. "It's the rain's jumbled everything up inside my head."

"The sea's got its own head and its own ways, child," she went on. "Comes the moment when it rears up and lifts its head to the very heavens, scraping up the fish from its depths and whirling them up in a column to the clouds. Beware, fisherman, not to get caught in that column! It'll twirl your boat round like a top and toss it sky-high, and then hurl it down on the shore so hard your sons won't be able to collect your bones!"

"The sea's the sea, ducky!"

"In 1914, for instance, there was a great flood. . . . Look there—out the window! It's almost reached the rocks, lashing out like as if it wanted to swallow the earth!"

Olga looked. She saw no sea; she saw nothing but a vast grey expanse heaving and billowing like smoke.

"It's angry," she said softly.

Aunt Manya nodded.

"That it is. Very angry, pet. Angry at us for stealing so many fish out of its belly. Angry at us for sending off train-loads of fish down all the roads in the spring, when the fish run thick. Hear it roaring, little kitten?"

"Yes. But go on with your story."

"Well, as I was saying, in the year 1914 there was a big flood. Your granny had a hut then on the very shore of the sea. Not like this house she lives in now. This is a good house—painted, and with good board floors and a cellar. That was just a mud hut. And it had an attic to it."

"Your grandad went a-fishing and your granny stayed home to take care of the little ones."

"Sudden your granny sees the water's come up to the window and is beating on the panes."

"She snatches up her little ones and climbs up into the attic. Your daddy was the littlest, no more nor a year old. He hears death knocking at the door of his mother's hut and starts a-wailing, poor little thing. Ivan and Katerina hang on to her petticoats, and there they are, the four of them, poor things."

Aunt Manya began rocking back and forth, and Olga began rocking too.

"Yes, there they are up in the attic peering through the chinks."

"The sea swelled up like as if the wind was blowing from inside, or its shores had grown too tight for it. Swells up and up till it reaches your granny's hut and sweeps it all away. Off she sails, your granny, with her littlest in her arms. Katerina hangs on to a board, and Ivan, the oldest, to a log."

"Off they sail into the sea, ducky, not in a boat, not on a float, not on a raft, but on their own roof."

"And a very rickety roof it was, with no stout beams to hold it together. And so the sea smashes it to smithereens and casts it over the water."

Aunt Manya blinked her eyes as she talked and kept looking out of the window at the rain.

"Off she goes swimming in the sea, your granny, with her littlest, your daddy, clinging to her neck."

Poor little thing! thought Olga of her daddy. Almost got drowned!

"And the sea throws her into the rushes of a little island, and sudden she feels her foot touch bottom. Then she takes a pole, sticks it end-up in the rushes and ties her kerchief to it like a flag, much as to say: 'Save us, good folk!'"

Aunt Manya drew a deep breath.

"About that time the water starts to go down, and the folk who had set out in boats to save the drowning see your granny's flag. So they pick her up—her and her littlest one."

"My daddy?"

"Yes, your daddy. A little later her biggest was washed ashore on his log. He was all blue and frozen, but there was still breath in him, praise the Lord!

"But then the sea give up your drowned grandad and little Katerina. Swallowed up everything, it did—your grandad and Katerina, and your granny's hut and all the nets and tackle. Your poor granny was left without so much as a copper to bury the dead with."

Aunt Manya looked round, got up, and threw open the window. She listened for a moment and shook her head.

Olga followed her to the window and peered under her arm.

She could hardly recognize the broad road that ran past Granny's house. The rain had beaten the dust and clay into a thin batter. She could hear the water gurgling in the puddles that stretched in a chain, one after another, at the side of the road. The rain plopped into the puddles. She could see the bubbles on their surface. She could hear the gurgle of the water. Little streams ran under the fences and joined one another as they flowed down the ditches.

The shutters banged on the houses whose windows faced the sea. The trees shrieked and bent their boughs over the roofs, snatching at the chimneys. Now they bent, now they straightened. They thrashed about in the air, screaming "who—eee! who—eee!"

Something big and fearful was banging against the bluff and the shore, letting out a dismal, long-drawn wail.

People with shawls and oilskins over their heads were running down the road.

What fearful tales of the sea they tell in Granny's village! thought Olga as she tugged at Aunt Manya's sleeve.

"What happened after that, Aunt Manya?" she asked.

"After that?" repeated Aunt Manya as if roused from a dream. "Where did I leave off, pet?"

"Where she had nothing left to bury the dead with," said Olga.

"Ah, yes." Aunt Manya slammed the window shut and went on with her story hurriedly. "Well, this is what happened, lambkin. Your granny went down the wet roads, over the soaked earth, to ask help of them as owned

the fisheries, for whose sake your grandad had given his life. But no help from them, precious. 'God's too high to hear, the rich are never near' as the saying goes.

"Back comes your granny and sees the fisher folk standing round the drowned ones. Cossacks they was, mostly. And they were throwing coins into a hat. Your granny could hardly bear to see them.

"The women folk was crying, of course. The sea—it's our food and drink, but it's our coffin as well."

"And what happened then?" asked Olga.

"What happened then?" said Aunt Manya, getting up again. "Lots of things happened. The widow's lot is not an easy one, pet. There she was—no house, no nets, no nothing."

At this point somebody's knuckle rapped sharply at the window. Olga started and clutched Aunt Manya's skirt.

Aunt Manya went to the window. A neighbour was standing outside with a sheet of oilskin over her head and men's rubber boots on her feet.

She waved her hand, pointed to the road, and ran off.

"I'm leaving you for a while, precious," said Aunt Manya quietly. "There's food for you on the table. I'll be back directly. Wait here, lambkin."

Throwing a woollen shawl over her head, Aunt Manya went out on the rain-soaked verandah and skidded down the wet path.

Her old-fashioned rubber galoshes sank deep into the mud. The rain whipped into her face. Her shawl was blown out by the wind. She made her way round the fence. She stopped and knocked at the neighbour's window. She went slipping and sliding in her big galoshes until she reached the last house, where she waved her hand to somebody and disappeared.

The street was empty. The house was empty. There was no one at home but Olga and the wind. Olga gazed at the rain and listened to the wind.

She was frightened and lonely.

She put on her coarse grey coat, still damp from the rain, looked about her, and ran out of the house.

The street was full of rain and puddles. Olga stood all alone in the middle of it. She saw a woman come running round the corner.

The woman made for the shore. After a moment's thought, Olga followed her. She went down the wet bluff, slipping on the clay, falling in the mud.

There were lots of people on the beach: old men and women, children, fishermen, and even the chairman with the moustache.

But Olga was all alone. She stood off to one side in her wet and muddy coat, and a strong wind from the sea hit her straight in the face.

The waves had white caps on them. The sea struck the shore with a roar and a shudder, as if an enormous wet hand were pounding the earth.

Olga's head went round, there was a ringing in her ears, and little dots danced before her eyes.

The waves were so high that the grey line of the shore could not be seen. All of it must have been under water.

The sea seemed to be smoking. It sucked back over the pebbles. The air was filled with a fine whitish powder with a salt taste.

Not long ago Olga had sat here on a big stone with Sveta and Lida. Now there was no stone.

Not long ago there had been a dredger anchored in the cove. Now there was no dredger.

Some rushes had stuck up out of the water. The rushes were gone.

Nothing but water. Water everywhere.

The water thundered. It did not speak. It roared like a herd of enraged cattle. It roared loudly and fearfully, as if shouting a warning.

The beach grew narrower and narrower. The sea grew bigger and bigger. The land was growing smaller.

People stood hugging the bluff and staring into the water.

"I told her not to go and she had no business to," an old woman was saying, "but she wouldn't listen to me. She's broken her old mother's heart."

The mention of the words "heart" and "mother" made Olga cry. Here she was, all alone on a wet, cold, unknown shore; not even Aunt Manya was to be seen in the crowd; and all these people had mothers, while she. . . .

Her sobs grew louder.

"Come, come," said one of the women at last. "There's no sense in making all that noise. Of course we know you feel bad about your granny. . . ."

The woman wiped Olga's face with an end of her kerchief. Her sympathy made the child feel all the worse.

She cried so loudly that everyone turned to look at her. She kept twisting the hem of her coat and saying, as she had heard the old woman say:

"My heart's broken!"

The chairman with the moustache turned round and instantly recognized Olga.

He came up to her, stooped down, and made a comic face.

Olga turned away and went on crying.

"Hush, hush, child," said the chairman. "This isn't the first time. Nothing will happen to your granny. She's been out in worse storms than this. Any fisherman has, and crying won't change it. Your granny has never yet lost a man. She'll bring everyone home safe this time, too; you'll see. Don't cry, child. My, what a baby you turned out to be! What a lot of tears! There's enough salt water in the sea as it is." Bending down, he gently wiped Olga's nose for her. "Don't cry, kitten. Everything will be done for your granny without your making such a fuss. Why, even the men in the district town are thinking about her. If necessary, they'll send a plane out over the sea to look for her. I'll get in it and look myself. Every fisherman counts with us, child. You've only got your granny out there, but I've got this many. . . ." and he made a wide gesture with his arms. "Four of my sons are out in those boats."

He took Olga's hand, and it grew warm, very warm. She held tight to his big rough hand and pressed her head against his leather jacket. She looked from the sea up at his bushy, good-natured moustache. The sea washed up against his rubber boots and sprayed foam over Olga's new slippers.

"Have no fear, child," said the chairman in his deep kindly voice. "Your granny will be coming soon. See, they've sent a motor boat out after her. She'll be coming, she'll be coming, your granny will."

Olga realized then that each of these people gathered on the shore was waiting for somebody. One for a father, another for a brother, still another for a son or a daughter. And Olga's granny was to bring them home. She saw the fisherman who had said her granny had snubbed him. He was gazing out to sea, shielding his eyes with one hand and murmuring "hmm" under his breath.

"Who's the little one?" he asked on catching sight of Olga clinging to the chairman. "I don't think I ever saw her before."

"Varvara Stepanovna's granddaughter," replied the chairman. "Konstantin's daughter. She's come from Leningrad to visit her granny."

"Well, well," said the fisherman, his eyes on Olga's new slippers. When he looked up he exclaimed: "My, how she's been crying! She must love that granny of hers! Don't fret, she'll come back, baby. Don't for a moment think she won't. She can't help it. She's the best team leader in the village. Why, there never was a team leader like her."

He stooped down and took Olga by the shoulders. She looked at him and swallowed down her tears without speaking.

Granny won't come back, she thought. Granny won't ever come back.

Suddenly it was as if a great wave leaped up from the sand at her feet and engulfed her heart. Oh dear, oh dear! Where can my granny be? Granny will never come back! Never come back? How is that? Who will tell Aunt Manya to comb Olga's hair for her? "Who is that little girl?" they will ask the next time Olga goes to the vineyard. "Varvara Stepanovna's granddaughter," Sveta will answer. "Varvara Stepanovna, the team leader who got drowned at sea."

Drowned at sea? No! no! It couldn't happen!

Olga stood with her fingers spread out, staring at her slippers. She wanted to take a deep breath, but she couldn't.

It had grown very dark. Olga could see a big white eye winking far out beyond the breakers. It was the light-house. It showed fishermen the way home, so that they wouldn't get lost at sea.

People brought lanterns, but they did not light the sea; they only lighted the pebbles on the beach.

Olga remembered how her granny had told Aunt Manya to comb her hair, and then had tiptoed out of the room.

On the evening before, her granny had probably stood on this same beach. Where could my granddaughter be? she had thought. And she had probably walked up and down the bluff, and from one yard to another, calling: "Olga! Olga!"

And all the while Olga had been in the vineyard eating grapes and enjoying herself.

Even when the moon had come up, Granny had gone on searching for her in the village, dragging her tired legs down the dusty road. All alone she had walked through the village, and people had glanced into her troubled face and said: "Don't

worry so, Varvara Stepanovna, your granddaughter will come back." But Granny hadn't believed them. When night settled down she had gone into the empty house and stood gazing out the window.

Tuzik had howled on his chain. Perhaps Granny had felt like crying. Perhaps she would have cried if she hadn't been a team leader. She must have looked out of the window for a very long time. Perhaps a wave had washed over *her* heart, too, and she had thought: Oh dear, oh dear, where can my granddaughter Olga be?

And just then Olga had come riding up in the cart.

Those are the thoughts that went through Olga's mind as she stood on the beach.

Granny's big sea was growing quieter and quieter. And the waves were getting smaller. With a quiet rustle, the water flowed back, leaving more and more of the beach showing.

Suddenly, from far away, came a whirring, like the whirring of grasshoppers.

"Here they come!" cried the chairman, forgetting all about Olga and leaving her all alone.

Granny! thought Olga.

"Here they come! Here they come!" was heard on every hand.

"Here they come," breathed the old woman whose heart had been broken.

The old woman cried, and the whirring of the grasshoppers out at sea grew louder and louder. They hummed and trilled.

Presently the prow of a motor boat was seen quite near the shore. And behind it, slightly tilting, like five swans, came five big fishing boats with their sails flying.

Everyone had forgotten about Olga. They pushed down to the water's edge.

"Let me through, let me through!" cried Olga, pushing along with the others.

But nobody heard her.

Suddenly the grey-haired weigher who had lifted up Granny's big basket of fish single-handed, bent down to her.

"Come along," he said, and lifted her up on his shoulder.

Now she was perched high up in the air. She could see everything.

"Bless their hearts!" sobbed the old woman whose heart had been broken.

"Quiet, old woman!" said the chairman sternly.

The motor boat came towards the shore. Big waves broke over its sides. The spray flew high into the air. A big man with a cheerful face was standing in the prow. He was all wet and shiny. His mackintosh which reminded Olga of Granny's jacket glittered in the light of the lantern.

"Ivan!" cried someone on shore.

"Hullo!" came from a boat.

"Daddy!" cried someone else on shore.

"Here I am, son!" was the answer.

"Maria! Mar-i-i-a!" cried the sobbing old woman.

"Granny!" cried Olga even louder.

"Olga!" answered Granny.

She was standing up in her boat. She saw Olga's wet slippers and muddy coat. The light of the lantern showed something glistening and trembling in the corners of her eyes. Her face was wet and her lips parted.

"My little lamb!" she said, and turned away.

Then she pulled herself together.

"Who let her come down to the beach?" she shouted. "The child must be frozen to death!"

"Varvara!" cried Aunt Manya, running out of the crowd and rubbing her blue eyes with a pudgy fist.

Granny was still standing in her boat. She was soaked through and through. She was wearing the rubber boots she had put under her arm in the morning when she had tiptoed out of the room so as not to wake Olga up.

"Catch the rope!" cried Granny.

The men in the boat threw a rope on the beach.

People caught it and pulled it up on shore, but the sea hurled the boat back again.

The people on shore held tight to the rope. All of them held on to it—the chairman, the fisherman whom Granny had snubbed, the children, the old people—all of them, no matter who they were.

Lida and Sveta were there. Sveta was crying and holding on to the skirts of a woman with a wet grey shawl over her head.

All of the people pulled Granny's boat up on the beach.

"Altogether—heave!" cried out Aunt Manya in a voice unlike her usual one. A fisherman's voice. Her wet skirt flapped about her legs.

Olga, too, pulled on the rope. She added her voice to the general cry: "Heave!" She felt that if she stopped shouting and pulling, Granny's boat would go out to sea again.

"We've got a new boatman!" cried the chairman, laughing and looking at Olga.

He laughed so hard that his moustache shook, his fat cheeks shook, even the sides of his unbuttoned jacket shook.

"A true granddaughter of Varvara Stepanovna," he said, and suddenly he stopped laughing and threw all his weight on the rope, glancing at Olga out of the corner of his eye.

Now everybody was looking at Olga.

But she was too busy to notice it. She was shouting and pulling as hard as she could. She was hot. Her wet coat flapped about her knees like Aunt Manya's skirts.

She was hauling in Granny's boat. Twice she fell down in the sand, but she sprang up quickly and went on pulling. She pulled until the boat ground into the sand.

There were lots of fish in the boat—even more than there had been two days before.

"Here," said the chairman, picking Olga up in his arms. "Go to that granny of yours."

"Wet?" said Granny. "My little lamb!"



Granny was holding Olga in her arms. Never before had Olga seen Granny's wrinkled face up close. The skin was dry and rough and red from the wind. And out of this weatherbeaten face two pale blue eyes with red lids were looking at Olga.

Granny's eyes were as calm as the water in a glass, and as deep as the water in the sea. And they were as kind as kind. Kinder even than Aunt Manya's.

"Granny!" said Olga in a tone of wonderment, as if she had never seen her granny before.

"That's all right," said Granny slyly, wrinkling up her eyes. "You weren't really afraid of me, were you?"

"I was," insisted Olga.

Granny put her down in the sand.

"Manyal!" she called. "Take the child home."

And she rolled up her sleeves and began tossing fish into a basket.

There were a great many fish, and they were all big and heavy.

"You've reached the sturgeon," said the chairman, bending over the basket.

In the bottom lay a long, bewhiskered, funny-looking fish. It thrashed about as if trying to leap up into Granny's face. But Granny just stood looking down at it as she pushed back her oilskin hat with the back of her hand.

"Sturgeon?" she said. "Call that sturgeon? You don't know what sturgeon's like. More like a sprat than a sturgeon!"

DADDY HAS COME

The leaves on the trees near the station were yellow, and there were dark mud-puddles in the road. Rain had been falling.

It was autumn. October.

Slowly a train drew up at the platform.

Milk-women got out, carrying full milk-cans. The lame gardener from the kolhoz climbed down the steps. On his back he had a big basket full of pears.

One lone porter stood in the middle of the platform. A medal "Defence of Odessa" gleamed on his chest.

"Take your bag, madam?" he said.

"No, thanks," said a man in naval uniform who came up at this moment.

The woman with the bag and the man in the uniform were Olga's mummy and daddy. They had just arrived at Granny's village.

They set off down the wide wet road.

Olga's daddy looked at the houses, at the rush roofs near the station, and at the deep ruts in the familiar road which his feet had not walked down for so long a time.

The milk-women hurried to market with their milk-cans.

A cart loaded with grapes rattled past at the edge of the road. A young woman in a woollen kerchief was sitting in it. She was chewing sunflower seeds and gazing now to one side, now to the other.

The cart jounced over a rut, splashing mud out on all sides.

"Anybody can see this is black earth," laughed Olga's daddy. "And very rich earth at that!"

"Yes," said Olga's mummy absent-mindedly.

There was a rustle of trees on either side of the road. The wind bent the boughs and snatched off the few remaining leaves. Quivering as if taking a long breath for the very last time, the leaves stood straight up in the air before they were torn off. Then they flew out over the road, circling and falling. At last they fell on the ground. They struggled to fly up again, but they could not. The mud held them fast.

On and on Olga's mummy and daddy walked along the rain-soaked autumn road on their way to Granny's house. The ruts made by the cart wheels were very deep.

They came to a house with carved balconies. Some little boys were standing in front of it. They were spitting out grape seeds and skins as they played. A wind from the sea blew out the ribbons of their sailor-hats.

On seeing the naval officer coming up the road, the little boys snapped to attention, crushing their uneaten grapes in their fists. As the officer passed, they all turned their heads to watch him. They had caught the glitter of the gold ensignia on his sleeve.

When the first shock of seeing him was over, they ran after him down the road, spitting out seeds as they went.

"Hullo, fellows!" said Daddy with a smile, waving his free hand.

They came to the park in the centre of the village. Someone was standing under the yellow trees and blowing a whistle.

"Tired, Zinaida?" asked Daddy.

"No," said Mummy with a smile. "I could go a lot faster."

They quickened their steps.

At last they caught sight of the big red roof of the kolkhoz offices. There was a green fence round the building. The chart Daddy knew so well was tacked to the fence. At the top of it was printed: "Lenin Kolkhoz."

Below this were some figures.

"Just a second, Zinaida," said Daddy, stopping to examine the chart.

And he read: "Varvara Suchova—308; Innokenti Latysh—284; Nadezhda Mishur—202."

"Come along," said Mummy.

"Mother's keeping up her record," laughed Daddy. He took Mummy's arm and walked faster and faster to the end of the village, to the edge of the sea, to Granny's house.

When they came in sight of the sea Daddy stopped again. Wooden piers jutted out into the water, which was a dreary lead-colour in autumn. Motor boats were moored to the piers. Brown smoke was pouring out of a chimney at the ship-repair shop.

Daddy tried to smile, but it was a wry little smile he gave. It was as if his heart were caught in the grip of some sweet memory. He would have liked to have closed his eyes and stood there all alone with his memories. He would have liked no one to see him standing there alone with his memories.

"Come along," said Mummy.

They walked on.

At last they came to Granny's house. The same old green shutters on the windows.

"Just as it was when I went away," said Daddy, "except that it has a new roof and the tree in the yard is bigger."

A sharp blast of wind came from the sea. The green shutters on Granny's windows thumped gently against the wall.

"Going on for four o'clock," said Daddy. "Mother's boat must be in by now."

Three little girls were crouching over a puddle near the fence.

"Catch the rope!" cried one of them, who had black pigtails.

"Take the strain! Take the strain!" cried a tow-headed one.

They were sailing a boat in the puddle.

"Take the strain! Take the strain! We'll never make shore this way!"

Daddy stopped and put down his bag.

In just the same way he had crouched at play beside this very fence. But in those days the fence had not been painted. And the sails of his boat had been different somehow—made of newspaper instead of rags.

"Come along," said Mummy.

"Just a minute," said Daddy.

He stood leaning against the fence of the neighbour's house trying to remember what his sails had been made of. Newspaper, of course.

"Sort them properly," shouted the black-haired little girl. "You're good at fancy-dancing, but when it comes to work. . . ."

She had on a plain grey coat buttoned up tight, and a comb in her hair.

"Olga!" breathed Mummy faintly.

The little girl lifted her head.

"Mummy!" she cried, and threw herself on her.

"And what about me?" said Daddy.

"Granny! Granny! Daddy's come!" cried Olga in a voice that could be heard from one end of the street to the other.

Granny came out of the house.

"Konstantin!" cried Granny. "Konstantin!"

"Mother!" cried Daddy.

They ran towards each other, and suddenly Olga could see that Daddy was much taller than Granny, and that Granny was old.

"Konstantin!" repeated Granny. "My son!" And she stood gazing into his eyes.

"Calm yourself, Mother," said Daddy in a trembling voice, putting his arms round her.

Women poked their heads out of the windows of all the houses to see Daddy and Granny hug each other.

"Varvara Stepanovna's son has come," they called to each other. "Konstantin, the youngest. She's quite overcome, poor dear. Anyone can see that."

Daddy pushed Granny gently into the house. He bent his head as they went inside, for the doorway in Granny's house was not very high.

"Konstantin, bless your heart!" cried Aunt Manya as soon as they were inside.

"Auntie!" said Daddy with a grin that showed all his teeth.

And so Olga learned that the old woman she called Aunt Manya was really her Daddy's aunt.

At this point Granny realized she had not said hullo to Mummy.

"Welcome, Zinaida," said Granny, kissing her.

Olga stood off to one side watching Mummy, Daddy, and Granny.

When the kissing was over, Mummy came over to Olga.

"Where did you get that?" she whispered, nodding at Olga's grey coat and the blue dress Granny had bought her with the money from the autumn catch.

Mummy seemed not to like Olga's new coat. Her face looked as if she had swallowed a plum pit. But then she noticed that Olga's cheeks were round and sunburnt and she had grown quite plump.

"How big you've grown!" said Mummy, smiling and taking off her hat.

Evening came. For the fourth time Aunt Manya went outside to attend to the samovar standing in the yard by the window. From time to time smoke and sparks from the samovar blew into the room. It was dark outside. There were no crickets to be heard or fire-flies to be seen because it was autumn. Nothing but the sparks of the samovar.

The family were seated round the table. Mitrich, the coachman, was sitting with them. He handed Mummy a dish.

"Try this, Zinaida Mikhailovna," he said. "Caviar. Fresh caviar, from the autumn catch. But perhaps you don't like caviar?"

The ear-ring trembled and glittered in his ear as he held out the dish.

Mummy took it from him and looked at Olga.

"Isn't there any salt fish?" she asked.

"Indeed there is," said Aunt Manya happily.

And she brought some salt fish from the kitchen.

Olga was the only one who did not eat. She was busy blowing the tea in her cup.

It's like the sea, she said to herself. Here, I'll blow harder. The wind is blowing. A storm is coming.

She threw a crumb of bread into her cup. That's Granny's boat, she told herself.

The crumb sank. Oh, what have I done! thought Olga in fright. A motor boat! Quick! A motor boat to the rescue! she said to herself in the voice of the chairman.

She stuck her finger into her cup to catch the crumb.

"What are you doing, Olga?" said Mummy. "That isn't nice."

"The boat's sinking," said Olga apologetically.

Granny looked hard at Olga for a second, then began to laugh.

"What's the matter, Mother?" asked Daddy.

Granny's was a soft, chuckling little laugh. She did not roll up her blue eyes when she laughed; she just shook all over. Her withered cheeks shook; her sinewy hands shook; the ends of her brand-new kerchief shook. Everything shook.

"Anyone can see how glad she is to have her son back," said Mitrich.

Granny went on laughing.

"Stop it, Granny," said Olga, tugging at her sleeve.

"Very well, darling," said Granny, wiping her eyes with the palm of her hand. "Will you miss your granny when you're gone?"

Miss you? thought Olga. "So I'm going away, Granny? And won't come back for a long, long time?"

Olga looked at her Granny and grew thoughtful.

Sparks from the samovar flew through the window.

The longer Olga thought, the sleepier she got. She was sitting next to her quiet granny with her head in her hand. Long shadows crept into her eyes. Her lids stuck together. She saw a lot of weeds growing by the side of the road and a cock running through them. Granny, barefoot and in an oilskin hat and jacket, was walking down the road. Sprays of salt water dashed over her. Drops glistened in the corners of her eyes. Her face was wet and her lips were parted.

"My little lamb!" said Granny.

"You're just like the sea, Granny!" said Olga, and a little shiver passed over her in her sleep.

"She must have caught cold," said Mummy to Daddy.

"Nonsense, Zinaida," said Aunt Manya with a wave of her hand. "Anyone can see she's your first child. Children always stir in their sleep. It's from growing. She's growing, the pet."

Translated by Margaret Wettlin

Illustrations by Naum Zeitlin



CHILDREN'S WRITERS

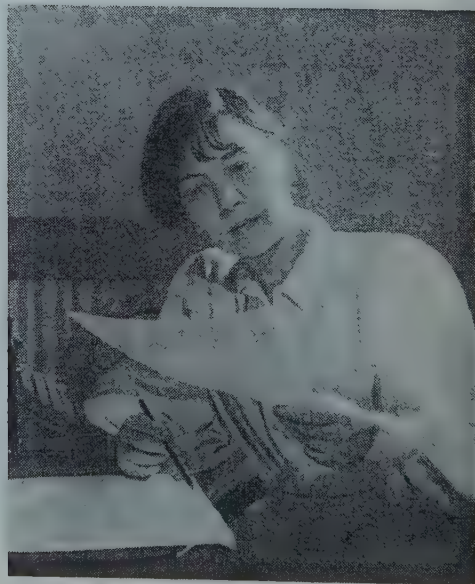
Sergei Mikhalkov



Nikolai Nosov



Agnia Barto



Susanna Georgievskaya

THE MAGIC FLOWER

There once lived a little girl whose name was Zhenya. One day, her mother sent her to buy some *barankas*¹. Zhenya bought seven: two, with caraway seeds, for Papa, two, with poppy seeds, for Mama, two sugared ones, for herself and one tiny pink one, for her little brother Pavlik. Zhenya took the string of *barankas*, and set off for home, gaping and dawdling and reading all the sign-boards on her way. A strange little dog followed her and started eating her *barankas* one by one: first of all, Papa's, with caraway seeds, then Mama's, with poppy seeds, then her two sugared ones. Feeling that the string of *barankas* had become rather light, Zhenya turned round. But it was too late—that little dog was just finishing off the last one—her brother Pavlik's pink *baranka*, licking his chops as he did so.

"Oh, you naughty little dog," cried out Zhenya, running after it.

She ran and ran, but couldn't catch that dog. She only lost herself instead. She looked around and saw that she had come to a strange neighbourhood. There weren't any tall houses there, only little ones. Zhenya took fright and burst into tears. Suddenly a little old woman appeared, as if from nowhere. She asked Zhenya:

"What are you crying for, little girl?"

Zhenya told the little old woman everything.

The old woman was sorry for Zhenya, and led her to her garden, saying:

"Never mind, dear, don't cry. I shall help you. True, I haven't any *barankas* or any money, but I have a little flower in my garden, called "Seven petals," and it's a magic little flower—it can do anything you like. I know that you are a good little girl, even though you do like gaping when you are sent to do errands. I will give you this seven-petalled flower, and it will make everything all right."

¹ *Barankas*—ring-shaped biscuits. They are usually sold strung together on a string.

With these words, the old woman plucked a very beautiful flower, something like a camomile, and gave it to Zhenya. It had seven delicate petals--red, yellow, blue, green, orange, violet and dark-blue in colour.

"This little flower," said the old woman, "is a magic flower. It will do anything that you wish. All you have to do is to tear off one of its petals, throw it up into the air, and say:



*Petal, petal, fly up high,
Make a circle in the sky;
North, and South, East, West, and then
Fly right back to me again.
When you touch the ground, then you
Do what I want you to do.*

"Then you make a wish and it will be fulfilled immediately."

Zhenya thanked the little old woman very politely, went through the garden gate and only then remembered that she didn't know her way home. She wanted to go back to the garden to ask the old woman to help her but when she turned round, she couldn't see any trace of the garden or of the old woman. Whatever could she do? Zhenya was just about to cry, as she always did when things went wrong, and had already wrinkled her little nose, when she suddenly remembered the little magic flower.

Let's try this magic seven-petalled flower, and see what it can do, she thought.

She hastily tore off a yellow petal and threw it into the air, saying:

*Petal, petal, fly up high,
Make a circle in the sky;
North and South, East, West, and then
Fly right back to me again.
When you touch the ground, then you
Do what I want you to do.*

"Now then, I want to be home, with my barankas."

These words were hardly out of her mouth when lo! she was back home, holding a string of barankas.

Handing Mama the barankas, she said to herself: "This is truly a wonderful flower: I shall have to put it in our very best vase."

Now Zhenya was quite a little girl, so she had to climb on a chair in order to reach Mama's favourite crystal vase which stood on the very top shelf of the dresser. But just then, to her misfortune, a flock of crows happened to fly past the window. Zhenya, of course, immediately wanted to know exactly how many crows there were—seven or eight. She opened her mouth and started counting, bending her fingers as she did so. Down fell the little vase and—crash!—it broke into tiny fragments.

"Broken something again, you clumsy girl," cried Mama from the kitchen. "Not my favourite vase, is it?"

"No, no, Mummy, I haven't broken anything. You're just imagining things," cried Zhenya in reply, and, hurriedly tearing off a red petal, threw it into the air whispering:

*Petal, petal, fly up high,
Make a circle in the sky;
North and South, East, West, and then
Fly right back to me again.
When you touch the ground, then you
Do what I want you to do.*

"Make Mummy's favourite vase whole again."

As soon as she had said the last word, all the pieces of the vase gathered together of their own accord and, lo! the vase was whole again, as though it had never been broken.

Mama ran in from the kitchen, but there stood her favourite vase in its proper place. However, Mama shook her finger at Zhenya and sent her out to play in the courtyard.

So Zhenya went out into the courtyard, where a lot of little boys were playing at Arctic explorers: they were perched on old boards and kept on poking sticks in the sand.

"Let me play with you," cried she.

"Play with us? Can't you see that this is the North Pole? We don't take girls to the North Pole."

"What kind of a North Pole is that? Why, it's only a lot of broken wood!"

"They're not pieces of broken wood—they're ice-floes. Get away and don't interfere. Can't you see that the floes are jamming now?"

"So you won't let me play with you?"

"No, we won't. Run away!"

"Well, and I don't care if you won't. I'll be at the North Pole without you, anyway, in a minute. Only it will be the real North Pole, and not your old make-believe North Pole. You and your silly old sticks!"



Zhenya slipped aside into the shadow of the gates, took out her magic seven-petalled flower, tore off a blue petal, threw it up into the air and repeated:

*Petal, petal, fly up high,
Make a circle in the sky;
North and South, East, West, and then
Fly right back to me again.
When you touch the ground, then you
Do what I want you to do.*

"Take me to the North Pole this very minute," she said. No sooner had she spoken than a whirlwind suddenly broke out, the sun disappeared, everything



became dark as night, and the earth spun under her feet, like a spinning top. And Zhenya found herself all alone on the very top of the North Pole—just as she was, in her summer frock and bare legs; and the temperature there was a hundred degrees below zero! "Oh, Mummy, Mummy, I'm freezing," cried Zhenya and started sobbing; but her tears froze into icicles and hung from her tiny nose, as though from a drain pipe.

Meanwhile, seven huge polar bears came out from behind an iceberg and marched straight towards her, each one more terrifying than the other: number one came at a run; number two shouted "Boo"; number three, "She's for *me*"; number four, "I'll have her gore"; number five, "I'll eat her alive"; number six, "I'll stop her tricks," and then the last, running fast.

Nearly out of her wits, Zhenya tore off a green petal with her frozen fingers, threw it into the air and shouted at the top of her voice:

*Petal, petal, fly up high,
Make a circle in the sky;
North and South, East, West, and then
Fly right back to me again.*

*When you touch the ground, then you
Do what I want you to do.*

"Take me back to our yard this very second!"

In the same instant, Zhenya found herself back in the courtyard. The little boys stared at her and laughed.

"Well, and where is your North Pole?" they said.

"I've just come from there," she returned.

"We didn't see you. Prove it!"

"Look—I've still got icicles on my face."

"You and your icicles! Blow your nose!"

Zhenya was so insulted at this that she decided to have nothing more to do with these boys; she went to another yard nearby, to play with the girls there. When she got there, she saw that they had all kinds of toys. Some had baby prams, some were playing with balls, some were skipping, one girl was riding a tricycle, while one girl was playing with a huge talking doll in a straw hat and galoshes. Zhenya became so envious that her eyes even turned green.

"Well," says she to herself, "I'll show them who's got toys!"

So she took out her magic seven-coloured flower, tore off the orange-coloured petal, threw it into the air and said:

*Petal, petal, fly up high,
Make a circle in the sky;
North and South, East, West, and then
Fly right back to me again.
When you touch the ground, then you
Do what I want you to do.*

"I want all the toys all over the world to be mine!"

And there and then toys from all over the world began running to Zhenya.

First of all, of course, came dolls, flapping their eyelids loudly and incessantly squeaking "Papa-Mama," "Papa-Mama." At first, she was very pleased, but there were so many dolls that they crowded the courtyard, the alley, two streets and half the neighbouring square. You couldn't even move a foot without treading on a doll. You couldn't hear anything but dolls chattering. Can you imagine the noise that five million dolls can make talking all at once? And there were no less, I assure you. Mind you, these were only the Moscow dolls. Those from Leningrad, Kiev, Lvov and other Soviet cities hadn't arrived yet, and were squeaking like parrots along all the roads of the Soviet Union. Zhenya, indeed, was just a wee bit alarmed.

But this was only the beginning. After the dolls came, rolling of their own accord, balls, air-balloons, scooters, tricycles, tractors, motor-cars, tanks, and mounted guns. Skipping ropes crawled along the ground, like snakes, tripping up the dolls and making the nervous ones squeak even louder. Millions of toy aeroplanes, airships and gliders filled the air. Cotton-wool parachute jumpers fell




like tulips from the sky, getting entangled with the telephone wires and trees. All the traffic in the city came to a standstill. The militiamen on duty were forced to climb the lamp-posts and didn't know what to do.

"Enough, enough!" shouted Zhenya in terror, clutching her head—"That's enough, do you hear! I really don't need so many toys. I was joking. I'm frightened. . . ."

But her protests were of no avail. Toys kept on raining from all sides. After the Soviet-made toys along came the American toys.

And now all the streets in the city were chock-full of toys right up to the very tops of the house roofs.

Zhenya ran up the stairs, and the toys ran after her. She ran on to the balcony, and the toys followed her; she ran into the attic—the toys kept on running after her; she climbed on to the roof, hurriedly tore off a violet-coloured petal, tossed it into the air, saying quickly:



*Petal, petal, fly up high,
Make a circle, in the sky;
North and South, East, West, and then
Fly right back to me again.
When you touch the ground, then you
Do what I want you to do.*

"Tell all the toys to go back to their shops this very minute."

And all the toys disappeared immediately.

Then Zhenya looked at her magic seven-petalled flower, and saw that she had only one petal left.

"Whoever would have thought it?" she said. "I've wasted six petals and all for nothing. Ah, well, never mind. I'll be more careful next time."

She went out into the street, thinking to herself as she did so:

What'll I wish for next? I think I'll wish for two kilograms of chocolates. No—better two kilos of acid-drops. Or, better still, I'll wish for half a kilo of "Mishkas!"—small waffled chocolates—half a kilo of acid-drops, a hundred grams of toffee, one hundred grams of nuts and,—oh yes—a pink baranka for little Pavlik. But, supposing I do? What good will I get out of it? Supposing I do ask for all that, and eat all the sweets up? I'll have nothing left. No, I think I'd better ask for a tricycle. But then, why? Well, supposing I do have a ride—and then, what? I wouldn't be at all surprised if those nasty boys take it away from me. And beat me into the bargain. No. Better wish for tickets for the cinema or the circus. There, at any rate, I'll enjoy myself. But, p'raps a pair of sandals would be better? Although, to tell the truth, what's the good of sandals? I can find something far better to wish for. Only, there's no need to hurry.

Reasoning thus, Zhenya suddenly saw a nice little boy sitting on a bench near the gates of a house. His eyes were blue and very round, merry but rather meek. He was a very nice boy—you could see straight away that he was not quarrelsome, and she wanted to make friends with him. She fearlessly walked

up to him, so close that she could even see her reflection in his eyes, with her two little pigtailed hanging over her shoulders.

"Little boy, little boy," said she. "What's your name?"

"Vitya," he replied, "and what's yours?"

"Zhenya. Let's play 'touch'?"

"I can't," said Vitya, "I'm crippled."

Here Zhenya noticed that on his right foot he wore an ugly, thick-soled boot.

"Oh, what a pity," she exclaimed, "I like you so much and would just love to play with you."

"I also like you, and would like to play with you, but I can't. My foot can't be cured."

"Oh, what nonsense you're talking, little boy," exclaimed Zhenya pulling her magic seven-petalled flower from her pocket. "Just look!"

And, with these words, our little girl carefully tore off the last, dark-blue-coloured petal, pressed it for a brief second against her eyes, straightened her little fingers and sang out in her thin voice which quivered with happiness:

*Petal, petal, fly up high,
Make a circle, in the sky;
North and South, East, West, and then
Fly right back to me again.
When you touch the ground, then you
Do what I want you to do.*

"Make Vitya well and strong again."

At that very minute the little boy sprang up from his bench, and began playing "touch" with Zhenya; he ran so fast, that she couldn't catch him, however much she tried.

*Translated by Louis Zelikoff
Illustrations by Leonid Lamme
and Leonid Mechnikov*



The Echo

*Though no man has seen it
We've all of us heard it;
It lives—without body;
It speaks—without tongue.*

Nekrasov

ECHO-KILLERS

Mark Twain tells the story of an eccentric who went around buying up places that had multiple echoes.

"His first purchase was an echo in Georgia that repeated four times; his next was a six-repeater in Maryland; his next was a thirteen-repeater in Maine; his next was a nine-repeater in Kansas; his next was a twelve-repeater in Tennessee, which he got cheap, so to speak, because it was out of repair, a portion of the crag which reflected it having tumbled down. He believed he could repair it at a cost of a few thousand dollars, and, by increasing the elevation with masonry, treble the repeating capacity; but the architect who undertook the job had never built an echo before, and so he utterly spoiled this one. . . ."

Architects have always fought the echo; they have done their best to kill, not build it.

Say, somebody puts up a big lecture-hall.

"Ho!" the lecturer says into the hall.

"Ho-ho-ho!" the hall shouts back at him, like a class of unruly school-children.

The walls shout, the columns shout, the chairs in the hall shout—all of them reflect the sounds and shout back.

The lecturer's voice is drowned in the clamour, and he refuses to lecture in that hall.

And so the echo-killer gets to work.

First of all he has to discover who is shouting, where, and why, and then find a way of shutting him up.

If a chair's shouting, he'll give it a padded back—let the soft padding swallow up the sounds.



If a column—he gives it a ribbed surface, and the ribs disperse the sound in all directions.

If the ceiling, he'll make it with a lot of cells, like a honeycomb. The sounds vanish in the cells and that's the end of them.

If a piece of wall is shouting, you can slant it and deflect the echo, the way you deflect a sunbeam by slanting a mirror.

Again, walls can be covered with cork sheeting or upholstered with soft fabrics that muffle sound.

In one hall they had to hang from the ceiling a contraption like an inverted tent. The sounds got caught and entangled in the draperies.

There was an opera-house with fine sound-properties, but then one season it was suddenly no good. The management couldn't understand what had happened. Everything was just as before—the seats, the chandeliers, the curtain—yet music-lovers shook their heads ruefully: the sound was "foggy."

At last they discovered the reason: fashions had changed. When the place was built, ladies went about in crinolines—great full skirts like open umbrellas. At the opera, the crinolines filled the house, and the sounds were absorbed by their ample folds.

Then styles changed, narrow skirts came in, there were no more rich folds of silk and lace, and that told at once on the sound.



Architects work tirelessly to kill the troublesome echo.

After they have built the walls and columns, they go about building silence.

And the walls, the columns, the chairs stop shouting, the vexatious clamour ceases.

The lecturer's voice rings out in the hall clear and distinct as a bell.

"SIXTH SENSE"

It isn't many people that have heard the squeaking of a bat.

For the squeaks of these little creatures are extraordinarily high-pitched, higher than the shrillest whistle.

However loud, such high-pitched sounds lie beyond the range of human hearing. Our ears cannot catch them.

That's one of the remarkable things about a bat.

More remarkable still is its ability to find its way in total darkness.

Do you remember how in *Tom Sawyer* Tom and Becky got lost in a cave? The cave was so deep that no daylight penetrated, and the bats' flapping wings snuffed out their candles.

The children had to feel their way, as if they were blind.

Yet the bats flew about in the pitch-black cave without colliding with each other or hitting the walls.





This uncanny power of the bat's long puzzled scientists.

They would let a bat loose in a room where heavy curtains had been hung over the windows and every chink and cranny stuffed up to keep out every single ray of light.

The bat would rush back and forth about the room, but steering so surely that the glass pendants on the chandeliers never tinkled once.

Could it be that bats saw in the dark?

The scientists pasted adhesive tape over the bats' eyes, but they flew about as blithely as before.

The scientists didn't know what to think. What was this strange "sixth sense" that enabled the creatures to steer in the dark?

Only recently was the riddle fathomed. It's the bat's squeaking that saves it from colliding with things. All the time as it flies it keeps squeaking, and the squeaks, reflected from the things around, come back to its sensitive wide-open ears. Things echo the squeaks, in fact, warning it of their presence.

The mysterious "sixth sense" turned out to be an extraordinarily keen sense of hearing.

Incidentally some other peculiarities of bats were explained.

Why, for instance, does the timid bat start clawing impudently in the dark at people's hair, particularly the big fluffy coiffures of women?

The explanation is that while most things effectively reflect sound, a person's hair absorbs and muffles it like a feather pillow. A head with a lot of hair hardly reflects sound at all, and so the bat does not notice it.

Receiving no warning, the bat runs full-tilt into the head and becomes entangled in the treacherous hair.

THE ECHOSOUNDER

Mariners of old would be equally puzzled by the miraculous ability of modern ships to avoid striking shoals and underwater reefs.

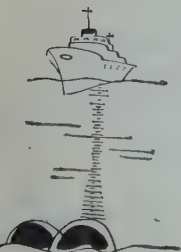
It's just as though the ship had a pair of sharp eyes that could see through the water and spot the hidden perils of the ocean bottom.

But it's an echo, it turns out, that does the trick.

The ship has no eyes under water, but it has a mouth and an ear. Fitted into its hull is a "loudspeaker," the sounds it sends out are reflected from the ocean bed and the echo is picked up by a sensitive microphone. The deeper the water, the further the sounds have to travel, and the longer, naturally, the microphone has to wait for the echo.

It was found that working with high-pitched sounds like a bat's squeaks was much more convenient than with ordinary audible sounds: there was less interference from outside sounds.

But an ordinary loudspeaker can't produce sounds of such high pitch.



A special one had to be constructed, making sounds even higher-pitched than the bat's.

It has no mechanism, this loudspeaker. Instead, it has inside a piece of singing stone—quartz, or rock-crystal.

Connect wires to the crystal, send a high-frequency alternating current over them, and the crystal will start throbbing with the impulses. A fine trembling will seize it, and it will begin to sing.

These crystals vibrate the membrane of the loudspeaker.

The microphone too, of course, had to be specially adapted to "hear" the inaudible high-pitched sounds.

So an instrument of great value to the sailor was produced—the echo-sounder, by which he can discover without any sounding-lines how much water his ship has under her keel.

The way it works is this.

Every time the loudspeaker gives a squeak, a special point makes a mark on a telegraph tape. And when the microphone picks up the echo, the point makes a second mark on the tape.

While the squeak is travelling to the bottom and back, clockwork keeps the tape moving. And the deeper the squeak has to dive, the further apart are the marks on the tape. The distance between them shows the depth in miniature.

Say the marks get closer together as the ship moves ahead, and a moment comes when the crystal's "Squeak, squeak" is echoed back instantly.

That means "Shoal ahead!"

AN ECHO CIRCLES THE GLOBE

Two operators were testing a rapid-acting radio telegraph.

One sat watching the automatic key send out its rat-tat of dots and dashes. At the receiver a little way off his colleague watched the tape come creeping out.

Then the two of them together proceeded to read the tape.

"I seem to be seeing double," one said, blinking.

The other took the tape and looked.

"Right enough, it's all double. Two dots where there should be one, and the dashes twice as long as they ought to be."

They set about checking the outfit and found nothing wrong anywhere. Everything was working fine, yet every dot insisted on coming out as two.

I don't know how long they puzzled over it, but then one of them thought of the echo-sounder.

"The first dot comes from our direct signal," he said, "and the second from an echo. The wave that transmitted the dot hit something that reflected it, and so it got to the receiver again. And the 'something,' I'd say, was the earth's 'electric roof,' which reflects radiowaves as a ceiling does sound."

"I'm not so sure about that," said the other. "The distance between the two dots is too great. Too big a time lapse between the two signals. The 'electric roof'



is only about a hundred kilometres up. And radio waves travel at 300,000 kilometres per second. It would be less than one-thousandth of a second before the echo came back. You wouldn't get two separate dots in that time, the tape wouldn't have moved far enough—it would have to be travelling at the speed of an express train."

Don't let's go guessing, they decided. We know the speed of the tape and the velocity of radiowaves, and we can measure the distance between the dots. Let's work out how far the wave travelled before it came back as an echo. The same idea as in the echo-sounder.

The figure they got was staggering—that wave had travelled forty-one thousand kilometres!

Astronomers were applied to:

"Can the wave have been reflected by some body 20,500 kilometres from the earth?"

"No, there isn't any such body," they replied. "But forty-one thousand kilometres isn't just a random figure, you know. That's the circumference of the globe."

And here everyone realized that the wave had circled the globe. It had raced right round it, bouncing back from the ground and the "electric roof" as a ball bounces from floor and ceiling.

The radio operators had caught a round-the-world echo.

ECHO-EYE



Lone aerials that look like a frigate's masts thrust up into the quiet night sky. From time to time showers of radiowaves go rippling out from them and seem to vanish without answer in space.

But that only seems.

Space responds with a crop of echoes, like a huge near-empty hall.

Planes in the sky respond, and ships on the seas, and the roofs of tall buildings. From all of them the waves come echoing back.

But these aren't echoes you can record on a tape.

The echo follows mere ten-thousandths or even hundred-thousandths of a second after the signal.

It's hard even to imagine a recorder that could make two marks within a hundred-thousandth of a second.

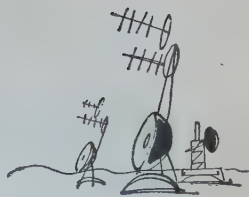
All the same, engineers have managed to devise one.

Instead of ink, it writes with electrons, and what it writes on is the surface of an empty flask covered with a composition that glows when the electron jet hits it. And so the jet scatters glowing dots on the sides of the flask. The first dot is the mark of the signal, the rest are the marks of the echoes.

Like light rays, radiowaves can be gathered into narrow beams. There are special aerials that do it, and if the waves are very short ones, you can also do it with metal reflectors like those that searchlights have.

What the engineers produced was a radio-searchlight.

A narrow pencil of radiowaves probes the sky like an invisible searchlight beam. If the waves hit some obstacle, as for instance a plane, two glowing dots appear on the side of the flask; and by the direction of the beam and the distance between the dots, the position of the plane can be accurately determined.



This is the radio-locator—radar—one of the biggest of modern inventions, which the inventor of the radio, Alexander Popov, already saw coming.

In recent years radar has joined forces with TV and become a device that unbelievably sharpens vision.

Radiowaves dive down from a plane to earth, and the radio-echo comes back to the pilot not as a sound, not as a crackling in his earphones, but as a screen image of a town which lies in the impenetrable darkness beneath him.

Radiowaves shoot out from a ship's masts, and the radio-echo draws for the navigator a map of the coastline and a picture of the ships in the vicinity.

People dream of space travel, and don't know that a space voyage already took place several years ago. The voyager flew to the moon and back from the moon to the earth.

Who was this daring voyager?

The radiowave!

A radar set sent it up into the sky, and it pierced through the "electric roof" that might have reflected it as a shell pierces through armour. Shooting on through space, it reached the moon, was reflected from its surface, and returned to the earth, where the receiver of the same radar set picked it up. The trip to the moon and back lasted two and a half seconds.

Now astronomers can find the moon even in the daytime, even on cloudy nights.

The echo has given man eyes that neither fog nor clouds nor the darkness of night can stop from seeing.

And they're coming to see to the very ends of the world.



1951

*Translated by Naomi Jochel
Illustrations by Igor Obrosov
and Alla Sechkina*

Konstantin PAUSTOVSKY

MEMORIES OF GAIDAR

LONG ago, back in 1916, I happened to stop off in Arzamas on my way through it. I was a southerner by birth and this was my first sight of a provincial Russian town. Arzamas was typical, down to the fancifully carved window frames, the inevitable potted geraniums on the window-sills and the old-fashioned bell-pulls.

Old Arzamas has remained in my memory as a town of apples and churches. The market was cluttered with baskets full of hard yellow apples and everywhere you looked you saw gilded domes as like them as could be. There were so many domes that you began to imagine the town had been embroidered in gold by the deft fingers of expert needlewomen.

There are hundreds of small towns in Russia, so obscure that hardly anyone knows about them. But Arzamas was lucky. Early in the 19th century its name was borrowed by the progressive literary society founded by the poet Zhukovsky. Pushkin was admitted to this society while he was still a schoolboy. It was there he was felicitously nicknamed "Cricket."

Then, it was in Arzamas that Maxim Gorky lived while in exile. And there, in the god-forsaken Arzamas of the early part of the 20th century, Arkadi Gaidar, the son of a school-teacher, grew up to be a fine Soviet writer and just as fine a man.

I shall not touch on Gaidar as a writer. His books are widely known. Many good and true articles have been written about them. I want simply to speak of the Arkadi Gaidar I knew, the Arkadi Gaidar who was my friend in the last years of his life.

"Simply to speak"—the moment I wrote the words I realized that the thing was not at all so simple. In fact, it is very hard to portray a person who is no longer with us in his right colours, without making him out to be a sugary, conventional hero.

Some reminiscences of Gaidar betray just this fault. The bombast, the saccharine praise screen from view the real Gaidar—a man of complex, sometimes difficult character, who like most talented men was full of contradictions, but was yet simple and full of charm, whose every act and word had weight.

The saying that real literature knows no trifles is very true. Every word, however insignificant at first glance, every comma and dot is necessary and

characteristic, they define the whole and contribute to the most incisive expression of an idea. Who does not know the overwhelming effect of a full stop in the right place?

I mention the matter because in the life of a real man, as in real literature, there are no trifles. Every act, no matter how trivial it may seem, every word dropped in passing reveals one more facet of his character.

Gaidar was a real man and a big one. And so every "seeming trifle" relating to him reveals some new facet of his complex character.

In these reminiscences I mean to present a few of these apparent trifles, the "small drops of water" which yet reflect the sun.

The chief and most remarkable thing about Gaidar, I think, was that his life simply cannot be divided from his books. It may be said to have been the continuation of his books, or sometimes, perhaps, their beginning. Nearly every one of his days was filled with unusual happenings, with imaginative notions, heated, interesting disputes, hard work and witty jests.

Everything he did or said at once lost its everyday, boring qualities and assumed the nature of the unusual. This was a wholly innate, instinctive trait of Gaidar's, part of his nature.

He was a born story-teller who could move children to tears, a story-teller of penetrating insight who was at the same time a stern comrade and tutor.

He could read children, especially boys, like a book, at a glance, and had a knack of talking to them in such a way that within two or three minutes every one of them was ready to attempt any heroic feat at a word from him.

Our longest time together was when we lived amidst the Meshchera woods, near Ryazan, in a village called Solotcha. There Gaidar conceived and wrote several of his books and short stories.

Gaidar's manner of writing was nothing like the way we usually picture the process. He would walk up and down the garden muttering to himself, reciting the next chapter of the book he was working on, correcting himself as he went along, changing a word here or a sentence there, laughing or frowning. Only when he had it all firmly fixed in his mind would he go to his room and write it down from memory. After that he rarely altered a word.

I was working too at the time, in a little shed formerly used as a bath-house, in the garden, and from there I could hear Gaidar's muttering. Of course, I could make out only the words he spoke as he passed by my open window. Each time he passed he looked angrily at me out of the corner of his eye—angrily because he could not understand how anyone could work at a desk for hours on end. For those who did, he had a sneaking regard tinged with envy.

"On my word of honour, if I could work at a desk," he told me once, "I'd have written a whole shelfful of books by now."

Afterwards, when *The Drummer Boy* was published and Gaidar brought me a copy in Moscow, reading the snatches I had heard in the neglected, shady village garden was like meeting old friends.

"Look," I reminded him, "you said this sentence as you were finishing an apple, a big, red one."

"And I thought of this one," he joined in, "when the titmouse was hanging head down from the maple branch, looking into your window. It wanted to steal the nasturtium seeds. They were drying on the sill. Remember?"

So, line by line, we recalled the history of this enchanting book, and Gaidar was very pleased.

Sometimes Gaidar would come over and ask without beating about the bush:

"Care to have me read you my new book? I finished it yesterday."

"Of course."

And then he would do something beyond all comprehension. Generally in such cases a writer pulls out his manuscript, lays it down on the table, smooths it out with the palm of his hand, hastily lights a cigarette which always goes out after the first puff, mumbles a few vague and piteous words about being a very poor reader and the manuscript being, besides, quite raw yet. Only after this rigamarole does he begin to read in a hoarse, nervous voice.

Gaidar never pulled any manuscripts out of his pocket. He would plant himself in the middle of the room, hands clasped behind his back, and, rocking on his heels, calmly and confidently begin to recite the whole of his book from memory, page after page.

Rarely would his memory fail him. If it did happen, he would flush with anger and snap his fingers impatiently. At particularly good passages his eyes would pucker up in a mischievous smile.

Twice we, his friends, made a bet with him and followed his reading by the published text, but never once did he make a slip or even falter, and the payment he demanded was always so impossible—like buying him an outboard motor—that we gave the thing up and never tried checking on him again.

But what, the reader may well ask, does this ability of Gaidar's prove except that he had a brilliant memory? Actually, the point here is not so much his memory (which, incidentally, was somewhat impaired as a result of shell shock during the Civil War) as his feeling for words. Each word of Gaidar's prose was so carefully chosen that it was practically the only one that could have been used in its particular place and, therefore, naturally remained in his memory.

"Chiselled prose," we sometimes say, and what we have in mind then is clear-cut, sternly controlled prose in which there is nothing superfluous. Cast in bronze or even gold, not a single particle of the precious metal would be wasted on an idle word.

Gaidar was fond of making bets. There was the time when he came to Solotcha early one autumn when the land about was stricken by a prolonged drought. The earth was cracked, the leaves had turned yellow and fallen long before their time, the lakes and rivers had gone shallow, the worms had burrowed deep down in the earth. Fishing was out of the question. It would have taken several hours to dig up a miserable dozen worms.

We were all very much disappointed, and Gaidar most of all. But at once he offered to bet us that he'd have as many worms as we wanted by next morning—at least three tins full. It wasn't fair of us, of course, because we knew he was bound to lose, but we readily took him up on it.



Arkadi Gaidar

In the morning Gaidar came striding up to the little shed in the garden where I was living that summer. I was just about to have tea. Silently, with tightly compressed lips, he set four tins of magnificent worms down on the table, next to the sugar-bowl. Unable to restrain himself any longer, he burst into a laugh, grabbed me by the arm and dragged me across the garden and out into the street. On the outside of the gate hung a great big sign: "Worms Bought Here." He had hung it up late the night before. By morning the gate was besieged by a crowd of boys with tins full of worms. They drove a hard bargain but settled, at last, for three fish-hooks a tin.

From then on we were never short of worms, but we weren't making any more bets with Gaidar. There was no use, he always won.

He was always full of fun, that Gaidar. Sparks of laughter swarmed in his grey eyes, seldom disappearing—only when he was working or when he happened to come across some careerist or hack-writer. At such times he would turn pale with anger and be harsh and merciless. He gave no quarter, ever. The petty intrigues of small-minded men choking with frustrated ambition drove him wild with fury. He pursued them with caustic verses and epigrams, and he was feared.

Gaidar spent part of his time in Solotcha studying French. He carried about with him an old illustrated French textbook. The pictures showed men at work on farms, or a landscape with a train, a ship, or a balloon. Under them it said in

French: "What do we see in this interesting picture?" The pupil was supposed to reply in French.

The question delighted Gaidar. For days he went around asking, in and out of place: "What do we see in this interesting picture?" and, imitating the textbook replied: "We see a scraggy village tom-cat which has stolen a fish called a shiner, caught by Ruvim Fryerman, and, stealing along the top of a wooden fence, is carrying it away in its teeth."

On one occasion the two of us were returning to Moscow from Solotcha by the narrow gauge line. Our small train rattled its way through dense autumn woodland. Its late clatter was answered by the lonely howls of wolves. In the middle of the night Gaidar woke me.

"What do we see in this interesting picture?" he asked.

I could see nothing. The candle in the swinging lantern was almost out and long shadows flickered through the car.

"We see," said Gaidar, "one railway thief who is trying to pull a pair of felt boots from the bag of a nice old lady who is innocently dozing."

He jumped from his berth and seized a spry young man in an enormous checked cap by the back of his collar.

"Hop it," he cried. "If I ever lay hands on you again, I'll. . . ."

Before he could finish the thief wrenched himself free, dashed to the door and jumped off the speeding train. To tell the truth, we felt a little sorry for him—it was a bad night, wind and wolves howled outside the windows.

We spent a lot of time together rambling about meadow and woodland lakes. Gaidar was an invaluable companion on a camping trip. Strong as a giant, he carried any load without a murmur and reacted to all the inevitable mishaps with good-natured irony. He amused himself on the way by speaking in the style of the old adventure stories.

"The weary travellers," he would say, "leave the unexplored, inhospitable shores of the lake, carrying on their backs a heavy and useless load, to wit: a tent, an axe, a lantern, and so on and so forth."

Gaidar took pleasure in listing our scant camping equipment. He had a nice, rather childish fondness for all camping and hunting gear and for tools—fishing rods, fish-hooks, planes, axes, screwdrivers, flasks, lanterns.

He was forever hunting out novelties in Moscow—an automatic fish-hook or a penknife with twelve blades—and proudly bringing them to Solotcha.

He liked to do everything himself, to repair things, fuss about with machinery and, as certain signs made us suspect, would have been the happiest of mortals if he could have taken to pieces and then put together again the old clock hanging on the wall of our shed. But since it was the only timepiece in the house, he did not venture to do more than add or pour off water from the bottle attached to the weight until he had the clock keeping perfect time.

These camping trips of ours are unforgettable; each one of them (Gaidar called them "sorties of the fishing patrol") is worth telling about. But that would fill a whole book, a book about dark autumn nights on the banks of nameless woodland lakes, about campfires and stubborn tea kettles, about discussions, about

the starry skies of September, about Gaidar's songs, about how we told time by the star Sirius, about Lake Chornoye and Lake Segden where we often slept over in the lonely hut of that wonderful man, Kuzma Zotov, about meadows and the warm haystacks we crawled into on frosty nights, about the willows along the Prorva under which we sat up around a campfire all night in a green-black whispering cave of leaves while Gaidar told the story of how he "commanded a small war" at the time of Antonov.¹ Far off on the Oka a tugboat whistled incessantly and just before dawn, as the sky began to pale, migrating flocks of cranes flew over our heads.

Gaidar listened long to their ringing cries.

"Yes!" he exclaimed. "It's good to live like this!"

He seldom made such statements. He was very shy of showing his feelings and often assumed a needlessly stern air.

Many legends are told about Gaidar in our country. Each one of them is based on some real incident. At times he deliberately provoked these incidents, these legends, in order to place himself and others in some unusual and complicated position and then find a clever way out.

His imagination worked all the time. Part of it he poured into his books, and part—a very big part—he scattered over all the days of his life. Perhaps that is the reason for the many legends about him.

I said before that Gaidar's life was sometimes the continuation and sometimes the beginning of his books. About two years before the appearance of *Timur and His Team*, Gaidar dropped in to see me on a day when my son was dangerously ill and we had all run ourselves ragged looking for the rare medicine he required. We hadn't been able to find it anywhere.

Gaidar went over to the telephone and rang up his own number.

"Send all the boys of our courtyard here to me at once. Hurry."

Ten minutes later the doorbell rang shrilly. Gaidar hastened to answer it. At the door stood about ten boys, all keyed up and panting for breath.

"Listen," Gaidar told them. "There's a very sick boy in here. He needs this medicine. I'll write the name of it on a slip of paper for each of you. Hurry off and make a round of all the chemists' shops—south, east, north and west. Ring me up here from them. Got it straight?"

"We're on our way, Arkadi Petrovich," the boys shouted and raced down the stairs.

Soon their calls began coming in.

"Arkadi Petrovich!" an excited voice cried in the receiver. "They haven't got it at the chemist's on Maroseika."

"Go on to the one on Razgulai."

Gaidar sat at the phone like a captain on the bridge. After a wait of forty minutes an exultant voice shouted over the phone:

"Arkadi Petrovich, I've found it!"

¹ Antonov was a Socialist-Revolutionary who headed a counter-revolutionary revolt in 1920-21. By that time Gaidar, who had joined the Red Army at the age of fourteen (1918), was the commander of a regiment.

"Where?"

"At Marina Roshcha."

"Rush it here."

The medicine was brought and my son shortly began to feel better.

"Well," Gaidar asked as he was leaving, "doesn't my team work well?"

Thanking him was out of the question. It always made him very angry to be thanked for his help. He considered it just as natural to help a fellow-creature as, say, to greet him. And after all, you don't thank people for saying hello to you.

At one time Gaidar and I lived together in the Crimea, in Yalta. That was, I believe, the most tranquil period in his life. He was unusually thoughtful and gentle then.

We went for long walks along the mountain roads, sat on the beach. For the first time Gaidar was not wearing his semi-military clothes but a soft grey suit which somehow accentuated the fairness of his hair and made him look taller and more graceful.

It was a gentle Crimean spring with dark, warm nights, blue-misted mornings, the surging of the sea, the tinkling of the springs.

One day we were strolling along the deserted Massandra Street, overlooking the sea. Gaidar stopped short at the sound of alarmed voices and cries in a nearby garden. It appeared the tap had been blown off the ground pipe that supplied the garden with water. A strong jet was beating down the rose and lilac bushes and washing the earth away from the flower-beds, threatening to destroy the whole garden. Several men were racing up the street to shut off the hydrant and save the garden.

Gaidar ran to the pipe, gauged it and clapped the palm of his hand over it. The flow of water ceased. I saw by his face that it was taking all his strength to hold out against the powerful pressure of the water and that it was very painful. His face turned dark and he clenched his teeth, but kept his hand on the pipe until the distant hydrant was found and the water turned off.

After that his breath came in short gasps for a long time. His palm was bleeding, but he felt happy—not because he had proved his strength but because he had saved this lovely little garden.

Several times afterwards he went to look over the fence at the garden. It was indeed a beautiful one—a bouquet held together by the small stone fence around it.

The subject of Gaidar is endless. Necessarily, I must limit myself to these brief recollections.

I write these lines in Solotcha, in the attic of the house where Gaidar lived. Everything here is reminiscent of him. On the wall hangs his tarpaulin coat. I go fishing with his rod. All that is lacking is his voice, his laughter, his stories and witticisms, he himself—the big, kind, talented man who perished so heroically and who deservedly lies buried side by side with another great singer and herald of the people's happiness—Taras Shevchenko.

He died riddled by fascist bullets, died defending his beloved country. He lived a remarkable writer and a man out of the ordinary, and he died a hero.



Arkadi GAIDAR

THE BLUE CUP

J WAS thirty-two at the time. Marusia was twenty-nine and our daughter Svetlana six-and-a-half. I took my holidays late that summer and rented a *dacha* near Moscow for the last month of warm weather. Svetlana and I intended to fish and swim and go mushroom- and nut-gathering. But we had to begin with sweeping the yard, repairing the dilapidated fences, putting up clothes-lines and driving in hooks and nails.

We very soon had enough of that but Marusia kept thinking of one new thing after another for herself and for us to do.

It was not until late in the afternoon of the third day that we finally got through all that. But just when the three of us were about to go for a walk Marusia's friend the polar flyer turned up.

They sat under the cherry-trees in the garden for a long time. Svetlana and I strolled to the shed in the yard and out of spite set about making a wooden whirligig.

When dusk began to fall, Marusia called to Svetlana that it was time for her to drink her milk and go to bed. She herself went to the station to see the air-man off.

But I felt lonely without Marusia, and Svetlana did not feel like sleeping there on her own in the empty house.

We took some flour from the larder, boiled it up with water and made a paste.

We pasted some coloured paper on the vanes of the whirligig, smoothed it down nicely and clambered on to the roof through the dusty attic.

So there we were sitting on the roof. From up there we could see down into the neighbouring garden where a samovar stood smoking at the porch. On the porch sat a lame old man with a balalaika on his knees and a crowd of boys around him.

Then a bent old woman popped barefoot out of the dark room behind. She shoved the boys aside, scolded the old man and picking up a duster started slapping the top of the samovar to fan up the fire inside.

We laughed and told ourselves that soon the wind would get up and our whirligig would start spinning and humming. Then the children from every yard would dash to our house and we would have our own company.

And the next day we would think of something else too.

Perhaps we would hollow out a deep cave for the frog that lived in our garden near the damp cellar.

Maybe we would ask Marusia for some strong thread and fly a paper kite higher than the silo tower, higher than the yellow pine-trees, higher even than the hawk which had been hovering in the sky all day with its eye on the chickens and rabbits.

And maybe early next morning we would sit in the boat, I at the oars, Marusia at the rudder, Svetlana as a passenger, and we would row down the river to where a big forest was said to lie, to a place where two hollow birch-trees grew on the bank. Under them the little girl from next door had found three beautiful mushrooms the day before. Unfortunately they were worm-eaten.

Svetlana gave a sudden tug at my sleeve and said:

"Look, Daddy, isn't that Mummy coming? We mustn't let her catch us up here."

True, Marusia was coming along the path that skirted the fence. She had returned earlier than we expected.

"Bend down," I said to Svetlana. "Perhaps she won't notice."

But Marusia noticed us at once and looking up called:

"What are you two wretches doing up there on the roof? It's damp out-of-doors. Svetlana ought to have been in bed hours ago. And you were so glad that I was out that you'd have gone on playing pranks till midnight."

"We're not playing pranks, Marusia," I replied. "We've made a whirligig. Wait a little, we've only three more nails to put in."

"You can do that tomorrow," Marusia said sternly. "Now, come down at once or I'll be really angry."

Svetlana and I exchanged glances. Things looked bad. Down we came. But we felt sore at Marusia.

And although Marusia had brought Svetlana a big apple from the station and some tobacco for me we felt sore all the same.

That was the mood in which we went to bed that night.

Then in the morning there was something else. We were hardly awake when Marusia came in and said:

"You'd better own up, you bad people. Who broke my blue cup in the larder?"

I hadn't broken the cup and Svetlana said she hadn't. We looked at each other and both of us felt that Marusia was accusing us falsely.

But Marusia did not believe us.

"Cups are not alive," she said. "They don't have legs. They can't jump down from the shelf. And besides you two went into the larder yesterday. You broke it but won't own up. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, comrades."

After breakfast Marusia suddenly decided to go up to town, and left us sitting there thinking things over.

So that was the end of our boat trip.

The sun shone at us through the window. The sparrows hopped about the sandy paths. The chickens ran through holes in the wattle fence, out from the yard into the road and back from the road into the yard. But we did not feel at all happy.

"Well," I said to Svetlana. "We were driven off the roof yesterday. We had the empty kerosene tin taken away from us the other day. We've been wrongly blamed for breaking some blue cup or other. What sort of life do you call that?"

"A very bad life, that's what I call it," said Svetlana.

"Come on, then, Svetlana. Put on your pink frock. We'll take my haversack from behind the stove, we'll put inside it your apple, my tobacco, a box of matches, a knife, a loaf and we'll leave this house and go where our fancy takes us."

Svetlana pondered and asked:

"And where will your fancy take us?"

"It'll take me through the window, Svetlana, to that glade where the landlady's cow is grazing. And beyond that glade, I know, there's a goose pond, and beyond the pond there's a water-mill, and beyond the mill a birch grove grows on a hill. But what lies beyond that hill that I don't know."

"All right," Svetlana assented, "we'll take some bread and the apple and your tobacco, but bring a thick stick with you too because somewhere over there lives a horrid dog called Polkan. The boys told me that it almost bit one of them to death."



That's what we did. We stuffed everything into the haversack, shut all five windows, locked both doors and hid the key under the floor of the porch.

Good-bye, Marusia! And whatever you say we didn't break your cup.

As we went through the wicket gate we met a milk-woman.

"D'you want any milk today?"

"No, thank you. Not today nor any other day."

"It's good, fresh milk from my own cow," she said, offended. "You'll be sorry when you get back."

With her pails clattering, she walked on. How could she guess that we were going far away and maybe never coming back?

No one could guess that. A sun-burned lad dashed past on a bicycle. A fat man in shorts strode by smoking a pipe. He was probably off to the forest after mushrooms. A girl passed us, her fair hair wet after bathing. But we saw nobody we knew.

We crossed the allotments and came out into a glade yellow with buttercups, removed our sandals and walked barefoot on the warm path through a meadow, straight for the mill.

We walked and walked and suddenly we saw a figure come hurtling out of the mill. It bent as it ran and out of the broom bushes a clod of earth came flying after him. It looked very strange. What was going on? Svetlana's eyes grew sharp and she stopped and said:

"I know who that is. It's a little boy named Sanka Kariakin. He lives in the next house where some pig broke into the orchard and grubbed up the tomato plants. Yesterday he was riding someone else's goat opposite our *dacha*."

Sanka ran over to us, stopped, and wiped his tears away with a cotton bag.

"Why, Sanka," we asked him, "why were you running like the wind just now and why were clods of earth flying in your direction from the bushes?"

Sanka averted his eyes.

"Granny sent me to the kolkhoz shop to buy some salt," he said. "But Pashka Bukamashkin is sitting over there at the mill and he wants to fight me."

Svetlana looked at him. So that's what it was.

Surely there isn't a law in the Soviet land by which someone on his way to the kolkhoz shop for salt, doing no harm to anyone, has to fight for no reason at all!

"Come with us, Sanka," said Svetlana. "Don't be afraid. We're going that way, we'll stand up for you."

The three of us walked through the thick broom.

"There he is. That's Pashka Bukamashkin," said Sanka and took a step back.

We looked. We saw the mill. Nearby stood a cart. Under the cart lay a curly-coated dog covered with burs. Cocking one eye he watched the sparrows nimbly pecking among the grains of corn in the sand. On a mound of sand sat Pashka Bukamashkin, shirtless, and munching a fresh cucumber.

Pashka noticed us but was not scared; he merely tossed the rest of the cucumber to the dog and said, without looking at anything in particular:

"Tiu! Sharik. . . Tiu! Here comes that famous fascist, Sanka of the White Guard. You wait, you miserable fascist. We'll deal with you one day."

At that point Pashka spat far off into the sand. The dog growled. The frightened sparrows flew noisily off to a tree. On hearing those words Svetlana and I drew nearer to Pashka.

"Wait a minute, Pashka," I said. "Maybe you've made a mistake. What d'you mean? Fascist? White Guard? Why, it's simply Sanka Kariakin who lives near that house where someone's pig broke into someone's else's garden and grubbed up the tomato plants."

"He's a White Guardsman anyway," said Pashka stubbornly. "If you don't believe me I'll tell you the whole story. Want to hear it?"

Well, Svetlana and I very much wanted to hear the whole story of Sanka. We sat down on a log facing Pashka. The shaggy dog lay at our feet on the grass. But Sanka did not sit down. Going behind the cart he shouted angrily:

"Then tell them everything. And tell them the way I got hit on the back of the head. D'you think that doesn't hurt? Try and do it to yourself."

"There's a city in Germany called Dresden," said Pashka calmly, "and from that city a workman ran away from the fascists. He was a Jew. He ran away and came to us. With him came a girl called Berta. He works at that mill there, and Berta plays with us. She's just gone to the village for milk. Well, the day before yesterday we were playng tip-cat: Berta, me and that fellow Sanka, and another boy from the village. Berta waved the stick and the tip-cat hit Sanka on the back of the head by accident. That's what happened."

"It hit me really hard," said Sanka from behind the cart. "It made my head spin, but she just went on laughing."

"Well," Pashka continued, "she hit that Sanka on the pate with the tip-cat. He went for her with his fists at first but then changed his mind. He rubbed his head with a dock-leaf and went on playing with us. But he started cheating impossibly. Took an extra step and set the tip-cat pointing straight at the base."

"You're lying, you're lying," Sanka said springing from behind the cart. "It was that dog of yours. He shoved the tip-cat that way."

"But you were playing with us, not with the dog. You should have put it right. Well, he hit the tip-cat again, and Berta gave it such a biff that it flew off to the other end of the field, into the nettles. That made us laugh but Sanka



was angry. Of course, he didn't want to go into the nettle-bed after the tip-cat. He crawled through the fence and shouted: 'You fool Jewess! Go back to Germany.' Berta knows the Russian for fool all right but she didn't know the word Jewess. She came to me and asked me: 'What does he mean by that word?' I felt ashamed to translate it. I shouted: 'Shut up, Sanka.' But he went on yelling louder and louder. I went after him through the fence. He made for the bushes. He hid there. So I came back and looked round: the stick lay on the grass and Berta was sitting in a corner on the woodpile. 'Berta,' I called. She didn't reply. I went over to her and saw tears in her eyes. That meant she'd guessed. I picked up a stone and put it in my pocket and thought: Just you wait, Sanka, drat you! This isn't Germany. We'll deal with that fascism of yours!"

We looked at Sanka and thought: Well, brother, this is a nasty business. It's nasty even to hear about. And there were we thinking of standing up for you!

I was about to say this aloud when the mill suddenly began to shake and make a noise; the wheel came out of its rest and began to turn in the water. A terrified cat, smothered in flour, jumped out of a window in the mill-house. Half-asleep it missed its mark and landed plumb on the back of the drowsing Sharik. Sharik started and sprang up. The cat dashed up a tree, the sparrows left the tree for a roof. The horse threw up its head and jerked the cart. A tousled man, grey with flour dust, poked his head out of a shed and, not making out what was going on, shook his long whip at Sanka who was in the act of running from the cart.

"Now then," he shouted, "don't fool around or you'll feel a touch of this."

Svetlana began to laugh. She felt a little sorry for the unfortunate Sanka whom everyone had a down on.

"Daddy," she said to me. "Perhaps he isn't really one of those fascists. Maybe he's just daft. Is it true, Sanka, that you're simply daft?" she asked, looking at Sanka with a gentle smile.

Sanka's only answer was an angry snort; he shook his head, drew a deep breath and meant to say something. But what after all could he say when he was so obviously guilty?

Just then Pashka's little dog stopped barking at the cat and, turning to face the field, pricked up its ears.

Somewhere beyond the grove a shot rang out. Another. Then more and more.

"There's fighting quite near," cried Pashka.

"Quite near," I said. "That's rifle fire. And d'you hear that? That's a machine-gun."

"Who's fighting?" asked Svetlana in a trembling voice. "D'you mean to say the war's started?"

Pashka was the first on his feet. Behind him dashed Sharik. I picked up Svetlana and ran towards the grove.

Before we were half way there I heard a shout behind me. We turned and saw Sanka.

He held his hands over his head so that we could see him plainer and rushed towards us over ditches and mounds.

"Look at him, hopping along like a goat," mumbled Pashka. "And what's the ass waving over his head?"

"He's not an ass. Those are my sandals," cried Svetlana gleefully. "I forgot them on the woodpile and he found them. He's bringing them. You ought to make it up with him, Pashka."

Pashka scowled and said nothing. We waited for Sanka to catch us up and took from him Svetlana's light-tan sandals. And now the four of us and the dog went through the grove.

When we reached the far edge we saw before us a large field whose undulating surface was spotted with shrubs. Near a stream a goat stood tethered to a stake. As it cropped the grass a metal bell clanged at its neck. A single hawk glided in the sky above. That was all. Except for that there was not a soul or another object in sight in that field.

"But where's the war?" asked Svetlana impatiently.

"I'll go and have a look," said Pashka and climbed on to a tree stump.

He stood there a long time squinting into the sun and shielding his eyes with his palm. Who knows what he saw there, but Svetlana grew tired of waiting and, struggling with the tall grass, went off on her own to look for the war.

"The grass is tall but I'm small," she complained standing on tiptoe. "I can't see anything at all."

"Look down at your feet. Don't touch that wire," a loud voice said above her.

Pashka was off his stump like a flash. Sanka sprang aside clumsily. Svetlana flung herself at me and grasped my arm tightly.

We backed and saw in front of us, hidden in the thick boughs of a lonely tree, a Red Army soldier.

A rifle hung on a nearby bough. In one hand the soldier held a telephone receiver. He stood quite still looking at something on the edge of the empty field through a pair of shiny black binoculars.

Before we could say a word a terrific burst of gunfire struck in the distance, sounding just like the roll and roar of thunder. The ground shook under our feet.

A long way off we saw a cloud of black dust and smoke rise over the field. The goat jumped madly and broke away dangling its tether rope. The hawk swerved in its flight and with a sudden flap of its wings, disappeared from sight.

"The fascists are having a bad time," said Pashka loudly, looking at Sanka. "See how our batteries are shooting them up."

"Aye, the fascists are having a bad time," a voice wheezed, like an echo.

It was then that we noticed a grey-haired, bearded man standing under a bush.

The old man had powerful shoulders. In his hands he held a heavy rough stick and near his feet stood a tall shaggy dog baring its teeth at Pashka's Sharik who had its tail well between its legs.

The old man raised a broad-brimmed straw hat and bowed politely first to Svetlana and then to the rest of us. Then he laid his stick on the grass, pulled out a curved pipe, filled it with tobacco and lit up.

He was a long time getting his pipe going, pressing the tobacco with his finger tip, digging into it with his nail, the way you stick a poker in the stove.

At length he got it going and then he puffed and emitted such clouds of smoke that the soldier in the tree began to cough and sneeze.

Once more the battery thundered and we saw the empty quiet field suddenly come to life. From behind shrubs and mounds, out of ditches and from under hillocks—everywhere soldiers with rifles in their hands sprang into sight.

They ran about, jumped into the air, fell down and got up again. They drew together and closed ranks and grew steadily in number; finally with a mighty shout the whole mass of them made a bayonet charge up a slope whose top was already enveloped in a cloud of dust and smoke.

Then everything fell quiet. A toy-like signaller, only just visible, waved flags from the top of the slope. A bugle played a shrill Cease Fire.

Snapping twigs with his heavy boots the Red Armyman climbed down from his observation post in the tree. He stroked Svetlana's head quickly, pressed three glistening acorns into her hand and went off at the double winding up the thin field-telephone wire on a reel as he ran.

The exercise was over.

"Well, did you see that?" Pashka said reproachfully, nudging Sanka with his elbow. "That's not a tip-cat on the back of the head. Here they take your head right off in a flash."

"This is strange talk I hear," said the grey-beard, coming forward. "Sixty years I've lived in these parts without growing wise. I don't understand what's going on. There under the hill stands our kolkhoz 'The Dawn.' Those are all our fields: oats, buckwheat, millet and wheat. That's our new mill on the river. And there in the grove is our big apiary. And I'm the chief watchman for all of that. I've seen scoundrels, I've caught horse-rustlers, but I've never had a fascist turn up on all my sector—not once in all the years of Soviet power. Come here Sanka, you terror. Let me have a look at you. Wait, wait, stop slobbering and blow your nose. I'm scared to look at you in that state."

All this the old man said in a deliberate, derisive tone, looking curiously from under his shaggy eyebrows at Sanka whose eyes were popping out of his head with astonishment.

"It's not true," Sanka cried after sniffing hard. He sounded deeply hurt. "I'm not a fascist, I'm Soviet through and through. And Berta stopped being angry with me a long time ago and took a big bite out of my apple yesterday—more than half. That Pashka sets all the other boys on me. He swears and tricked me out of a spring. If I'm a fascist, then that spring's fascist too. And he used it to make a sort of rocker for his dog. I said to him: 'Come on, Pashka, let's make it up,' but he said: 'First we'll fight and then we'll make it up.'"

"You've got to make up without fighting," said Svetlana firmly. "Link your little fingers, spit on the ground and say: 'We'll never, never fight, we'll be friends for ever and ever.' Come on, link your fingers. And you, chief watchman, tell your horrid dog not to frighten our little Sharik."

"Back, Polkan!" the old man called. "Lie down and don't touch your friends."

"Ah, that's who it is. That's Polkan the shaggy giant with the big teeth."

Svetlana stood for a little spinning on her heels, then went nearer and wagged her finger at the dog:

"And I'm a friend, so you mustn't touch me."

Polkan looked at her: Svetlana's eyes were clear, her hands smelt of grass and flowers. He smiled and wagged his tail.

Sanka and Pashka began to feel envious and went up to the dog too, saying:

"And we're friends, so don't touch us."

Polkan raised his nose suspiciously: did those sly little boys smell of carrots from the kolkhoz vegetable-gardens? But at that moment, as if on purpose, a foal came rushing madly down the path in a cloud of dust. Polkan sneezed and so did not make up his mind about the boys. He hadn't touched them but he had not wagged his tail or allowed them to stroke him either.

"It's time we were on our way," I said. "The sun is high, it'll soon be mid-day. Ugh, it's hot."

"Good-bye," said Svetlana to all. "We must be off on our long journey."

"Good-bye," chorused the boys. They had already made it up. "Come and see us again when you're back from your long journey."

"Good-bye," said the old man with a twinkle in his eyes. "I don't know where you're going or what you're looking for but there's one thing you ought to know: the worst long journey for me is to that place, to the left near the river where our old village cemetery lies. And the best long journey for me is to the right through the meadow, through the ravine where they quarry stone. Farther on, you cross the wood and skirt a marsh. There, over the lake, a big pine forest stretches. In there you will find mushrooms and flowers and berries. On the shores of the lake stands a house. In that house lives my daughter Valentina and her son Fyodor. If you drop in there give them my best regards."

Whereupon the funny old man raised his hat, whistled to his dog, puffed at his pipe and strode off towards a yellow field of peas, leaving behind him a broad trail of thick smoke.



I exchanged glances with Svetlana. What did we want with that sad old cemetery? We grasped each other's hand and turned to the right on the better of the long journeys.

We crossed the meadow and dropped down into a ravine.

We saw people dragging stone, white as sugar out of a deep black trench. And not just one worthless stone. There was a whole mountain of stones. And everywhere wheels

were turning and wheelbarrows squeaking. And more stones were brought out. And the stones piled up.

It seemed that there were plenty of stones like that hidden under the soil.

Svetlana too wanted to see what was hidden under the soil. She lay flat on the ground for a long time looking into the dark trench. And when I dragged her to her feet she told me that at first she had seen nothing but darkness. But then she had seen a kind of dark sea and someone down there in the sea moving about noisily. It must have been a shark with two tails, one in front, the other behind. And she also thought she had seen a monster with three hundred and twenty-five legs. And one golden eye. That monster was sitting down and hooting.

I looked at Svetlana slyly and asked her whether she had not also seen there a ship with two funnels, a grey monkey in a tree and a polar bear on an iceberg.

Svetlana pondered and racked her memory. Yes, she thought, she had seen all that too.

I wagged my finger at her. Was she quite sure? But she laughed in reply and raced ahead.

We walked for a long time, making frequent halts to rest and pick flowers. When we grew tired of carrying the flowers we left bunches of them on the roadside.

I tossed one bunch to an old woman in a farm cart. She was frightened at first for she did not realize what was happening, and shook her fist at us. But then she understood, smiled and threw back three big green cucumbers.

We picked them up, wiped them, put them in the haversack and went happily on our way.

Our path took us through a little village where there lived the people who ploughed the land, sowed the grain in the soil, planted potatoes, cabbages and sugar beet, and worked in orchards and vegetable gardens.

Beyond the village we came across the low green graves where those who have finished their sowing and done their life's work lie.

We passed a tree that had been struck by lightning.

We met a herd of horses, each one of them a mount fit for Budyonny himself.

We saw a village priest in a long black cassock. We followed him with our eyes and were surprised that such funny fellows were still to be had in this world.

Soon we grew uneasy, for the sky was growing darker. Clouds were coming up from all directions. They surrounded the sun, trapped and covered it. But the sun broke through stubbornly first in one place, then in another. At length it escaped and beamed still hotter and brighter over the vast earth.

Our little grey house with the shingle roof lay far behind us.

Marusia must have come home long ago. She would look round and find nobody in. She would search and find nobody. She would sit and wait for us, the silly.

"Daddy!" said Svetlana at last in a tired voice. "Let's sit down somewhere and have something to eat."

We set about looking for a clearing in the woods and found one the like of which few people in this world are lucky enough to come across.

The well-loaded branches of a hazel-nut tree parted before us noisily. A young silver fir reached spire-like to the sky. And round the tree grew thousands of sweet-scented, motionless flowers—red, lilac and blue, both pale and dark—and all as bright as flags on a May Day.

Even the birds did not sing in that clearing—it was so still.

Only a silly grey raven which had flopped on to a bough cawed "Karr. . . karr. . ." in surprise and seeing it was not a place for her at once flew off to its miserable rubbish heaps.

"Sit down, Svetlana, look after the haversack while I fetch a flask of water. Oh, don't be frightened: the only wild beast that lives here is the long-eared hare."

"Not even a thousand hares would frighten me," said Svetlana bravely, "but don't be long, all the same."

As it turned out, I had to go a long way for water. I felt quite alarmed for Svetlana's sake when I returned.

But she was not frightened or crying. She was singing.

I hid behind a bush and saw the plump, red-headed little Svetlana standing shoulder-deep among the flowers and enthusiastically singing a song she had just made up.

Hey! . . . Hey! . . .

We didn't break the blue cup.

No! . . . No! . . .

The watchman's walking through the fields.

But we didn't break into the vegetable-gardens.

And we didn't steal his carrots.

I didn't climb in and he didn't climb in.

But Sanka did once.

Hey! . . . Hey! . . .

The Red Armymen walk through the field.

They came from Moscow.

*The Red Army is the reddest.
The White Army is the whitest.
Tru-ru-ru! Tra-ta-ta!
Those are the drummers,
And those are the pilots.
The drummers fly in aeroplanes.
And I'm a drummer here too.*

The tall flowers listened to her song in solemn silence and gently nodded their full heads to Svetlana.

"Come here, little drummer," I called, parting the undergrowth. "We've cold water, a red apple, some white bread and some yellow honey-cakes. I'll treat you to everything for that fine song of yours."

Svetlana fell a little shy. She shook her head reproachfully and screwing up her eyes quite like Marusia, said:

"You've been eavesdropping. Shame on you, comrade."

Suddenly she grew quiet and thoughtful.

And while we sat eating our dinner there a grey finch hopped on to a twig and warbled something.

It was a bold finch. It perched right opposite us and stayed there hopping up and down and warbling.

"I know that finch," Svetlana decided firmly. "I saw it when Mummy and I were playing on the swing in the garden. She swung me so high. Fiut! . . . Fiut! . . . But why has it flown after us from so far away?"

"No," I replied decisively. "It's quite another finch. You are wrong, Svetlana. That finch had a feather missing from its tail—our landlady's one-eyed cat pulled it out. And that finch was fatter and had quite another warble."

"No, it's the same one," Svetlana repeated stubbornly. "I know it is. It's come all the way after us."

"Hey! . . . Hey! . . ." I sang in a melancholy bass. "But we did not break the blue cup. And we decided to go far away for ever."

The grey finch warbled angrily. Not a single one of those million flowers swayed or nodded its head. Svetlana frowned and said severely:

"There's something wrong with your voice. People don't sing that way. Only bears do."

We continued on our way in silence. We came out of the clearing. And there, as luck would have it, a cool blue river glittered at the foot of a hill.

I picked up Svetlana in my arms. And when she saw the sandy bank and the green islands, she forgot everything else in the world and clapping her hands with joy, shouted:

"Let's bathe. Let's bathe. Let's bathe."

We took a short cut to the river, straight through a damp meadow.

Soon we found ourselves faced by a thick growth of marsh shrubs. We did not want to turn back so we decided to break through somehow. But the farther we pushed on, the more completely we found ourselves surrounded by marsh.



We walked in a circle, turning to the right and to the left, crossing puddles on slippery branches and jumping from tuft to tuft. We got sopping wet and covered with mud, but hard as we tried, we couldn't get on to the firm ground.

But somewhere quite near behind the shrubs we could hear a herd moving about and mooing, and the herdsman's whip cracking sharply and a dog barking angrily as it picked up our

scent. We could see nothing, however, except for the rusty marsh water, rotting shrubs, and sedge.

Svetlana grew subdued and her freckled face now wore a look of alarm. She turned to me more and more frequently, looking into my eyes with silent reproach. What's happening, Daddy? You are big and strong but we're in a real mess.

"Stay here and don't move," I said, placing her on a clump of dry earth. I turned into a thicket but in that direction found only dirty green water with a thin covering of matted fat marsh flowers.

I returned and saw that Svetlana had not stayed where I put her but was coming towards me, gingerly clinging to the bushes.

"Stay where I put you," I snapped.

She stopped. Her eyes blinked, her lips twitched.

"Why are you shouting at me?" she asked in a low quavering voice. "I'm barefoot and there are frogs there. I'm frightened."

I felt very sorry just then for having put little Svetlana in such a fix.

"Well, take a stick," I called. "Hit those horrid frogs as hard as you can. But stay where you are. We shall soon get through."

Feeling very angry I went back into the thicket. After all was this wretched marsh anything to be compared with the endless reeds of the broad valley of the Dnieper or with the grim floodlands of Akhtyrka where we had once destroyed and wiped out a landing party of Wrangel's Whites?

From tuft to tuft, from bush to bush. Once up to my waist in water. Another time a dry asp crackled, followed immediately by a rotten log falling into the mud. Then a sodden tree stump squelched heavily. That gave me something to step on. Then yet another pool. And there I was on the dry bank.

Parting the reeds I found myself beside a goat which leaped with fear.

"Hey! Svetlana. . ." I called. "Are you there?"

"Hey! . ." came a thin plaintive voice from the thicket, "I'm here."

We reached the river. We cleaned off all the mud and slime which had clung to us from all sides. We rinsed out our clothes and went for a swim while they

were drying on a hot sand. All the fish darted away in fright to their deep hiding places when we laughingly tossed the water up in sparkling cascades. The black-moustached crayfish which I dragged out of its underwater realm rolled its round eyes, jumped and twisted with fright: it was probably the first time that it had seen such unbearably red-headed little girl. Then it managed to nip Svetlana's finger maliciously. Svetlana screamed and flung the crayfish right into the middle of a flock of geese. The silly fat goslings dashed aside.

But an old grey goose waddled across to us. He had seen many stranger things in this world. He cocked his head on one side, looked out of one eye, pecked—and that was the end of the crayfish.

We had our swim, dried in the sun, dressed and went on.

And again we came across all sorts of things on the road; people and horses and farm carts and lorries and even a grey hedgehog which we took along with us. But soon it pricked our hands and we pushed it into a cold stream.

The hedgehog snorted and swam to the other bank. What outrageous people, he must have thought, now I must go and look for my hole.

At length we reached the lake.

It was here that the farthest field of "The Dawn" kolkhoz ended. On the other bank of the lake lay the territory of "Red Sunrise." We could see at the edge of the woods the log cottage which we guessed at once to be the home of the watchman's daughter Valentina and her son Fyodor. We walked up to the fence from the side where tall sunflowers stood like sentries guarding the place.

Valentina herself stood in the garden on the steps of the porch. She was a tall woman, as broad shouldered as her father. The collar of her blue blouse was open. She held a broom in one hand, a wet duster in the other.

"Fyodor," she called, "where did you put the saucepan, naughty boy?"

"There it is," an impressive voice answered from under the raspberry canes, and fair-headed Fyodor pointed to a puddle in which a saucepan was floating loaded with grass and wood-chips.

"Where have you hidden the sieve, you rascal?"

"There it is," Fyodor replied in the same solemn manner and pointed to a sieve full of heavy stones under which something was moving.

"You wait, Ataman. I'll give you a good spanking with a wet duster when you come indoors," Valentina warned him and, noticing us, pulled down her turned-up skirt.

"Good afternoon," I said, "your father sends you his regards."

"Thank you," replied Valentina, "come into the garden and rest."

We opened the gate and stretched ourselves under a tree of ripe apples.

Fat little Fyodor wore nothing but a shift; his wet trousers, smeared with clay, lay on the grass.

"I am eating raspberries," he told us seriously, "I have eaten two whole bushes. And I am going to eat some more."

"Good for you," I said, "but take care, my friend, you don't burst."



Fyodor stopped, pressed his fist into his tummy, cast me an angry look and, picking up his trousers, waddled into the cottage.

We lay there silent for a long time. I thought Svetlana had fallen off to sleep. I turned to her and saw she was not sleeping at all, but breathlessly watching a silvery butterfly which was gently creeping up the sleeve of her pink frock. Suddenly a loud booming sound roared out, the air trembled and a shining plane flashed like a storm over the crowns of the quiet apple-trees.

Svetlana shuddered, the butterfly flew away, the yellow cock jumped off the fence, a frightened crow darted across the sky with a loud call—and silence reigned again.

"That was that pilot," Svetlana said vexedly. "The one who came to see us yesterday."

"Why that one?" I asked, looking up. "It might have been quite another one."

"No it was that one. I heard him tell Mummy yesterday that he was flying away today forever, a long way off. I was eating a red tomato and Mummy said to him: 'Well, good-bye. Happy landings.' Daddy," Svetlana said, sitting on my stomach, "tell me something about Mummy. Tell me, for instance, what everything was like when I was not here."

"What it was like? Oh, it was all very much the same. The day began and then night came and then another day began, another night."

"And then thousands of more days," Svetlana interrupted me impatiently, "But tell me what happened during those days. Don't pull a face, you know what I mean."

"Very well. I'll tell you but climb down on to the grass, otherwise I'll find it hard to speak. Now, listen.

"Our Marusia was seventeen those days. The Whites fell on the little town where she lived, seized her father and put him into prison. Marusia had lost her mother long before then and so she was left quite on her own."

"Somehow I feel sorry for her," said Svetlana edging closer. "Well, go on."

"Marusia put on a shawl and ran outside. In the street White soldiers were leading working men and women off to prison. The rich people, of course, were pleased with the Whites and there were lights burning and music playing in their houses, but our Marusia had nowhere to go and no one to tell her troubles to."

"Somehow I feel very sorry," Svetlana broke in. "Hurry up and get to the part when the Reds come, Daddy."

"So Marusia walked out of the town. The moon was shining, the wind whistled, the broad steppe stretched before her."

"With wolves?"

"No, without wolves. At that time the firing had frightened the wolves and they were hiding in the forests. Marusia thought: I shall run across the steppe to Belgorod. There stands the Red Army of Comrade Voroshilov. They say he is a great man. Perhaps he will help me.

"Silly Marusia did not know that the Red Army never waits to be asked for help. It rushed to help everywhere where the Whites had attacked. Our Red Army detachments were moving quite near to Marusia through the steppes. There were five bullets for each rifle and two hundred and fifty for each machine-gun.

"I was there on patrol duty in the steppe. Suddenly I saw a shadow flash and disappear behind a mound. Aha, I thought, it's a White scout. He won't go any further.

"I spurred on my horse and it climbed the mound. I looked, but to my astonishment I saw it wasn't a White scout but a young girl standing there in the moonlight. I could not see her face, just her hair tossed by the wind.

"I dismounted, but for safety kept my hands on my pistol. I went up to her and asked:

"'Who are you? What are you doing running across the steppe at midnight?'

"Just then the moon came out, enormous.

"Noticing the Red Army star on my cap the girl flung her arms around me and burst into tears.

"That is how Marusia and I met each other.

"Early next morning we drove the Whites out of the town. We opened the gates of the prison and let the workers free.

"I had to go to hospital that day. I had a light rifle wound in my chest and my shoulder hurt: I'd hit it against the stone when I fell from my horse.

"My squadron commander came to me and said: 'Well, so good-bye. We're going on after the Whites. Here is a present of some good tobacco from your comrades, and some writing-paper. Lie still and you'll soon get better.'

"A day passed. The evening came. My chest hurt and my shoulder ached. I felt bored. It is boring, Svetlana dear, to be alone without your comrades.

"Suddenly the door opened and Marusia tiptoed in quickly. I was so pleased to see her that I cried out.

"She came up to me, sat down beside me, placed her hand on my hot forehead and said: 'I looked for you all day after the battle. Are you in pain, dear?'

"I said: 'I don't care a damn about the pain, Marusia. Why're you so pale?'

"Sleep,' Marusia replied, 'have a good sleep. I shall be beside you all day.'

"So that is how I and Marusia met the second time. Since then we lived together all the time."

"Daddy," Svetlana asked anxiously. "Do you think we did the right thing to leave home? After all she loves us. We'll walk and walk and then we'll go home again."

"How do you know she loves us? Maybe she loves you but not me any more."

"Oh no, you're wrong," said Svetlana with a shake of the head. "I woke up in the night yesterday and saw Mummy lay down her book and turn to you and look at you so hard."

"Looked at me! That's not much. She looks out of the window and looks at everybody. She's got eyes so she looks with them."

"Oh no," Svetlana said firmly. "When she looks out of the window it's quite another way, like this, see. . . ."

Svetlana raised her thin brows, threw back her head, pursed her lips and cast an indifferent glance at a cock that was strutting by.

"But when people are in love they look this way."

Svetlana's blue eyes shone as though lit by an inner radiance, her lowered eyelids fluttered and Marusia's sweet pensive look fell on my face.

"You little rascal," I cried, giving Svetlana a hug. "Now show me how you looked at me yesterday when you spilt the ink."

"Oh well, you'd turned me out of the room and that's the sort of thing that makes everyone angry."

We had not broken the blue cup. Perhaps Marusia herself had broken it some time or another. But we forgave her. Does it matter very much that people think badly of you for no reason at all? Why, Svetlana sometimes thought that way about me. Yes, and I sometimes thought badly of Marusia. I went in to ask Valentina whether there was a shorter way home.

"My husband will be going to the station very soon," Valentina said. "He'll take you as far as the mill and from there it isn't far."

On returning to the garden I met Svetlana on the porch. She looked embarrassed.

"Daddy," she whispered confidentially to me. "That boy Fyodor crawled out of the raspberry canes and is taking cakes out of your haversack."

We walked over to the apple-tree but that cunning little Fyodor caught sight of us and hastily took refuge in the depths of the burdocks beyond the fence.

"Fyodor," I called. "Come here, don't be afraid."

The tops of the burdocks stirred and it was obvious that Fyodor had decided to go farther off.

"Fyodor," I repeated. "Come here. I'll give you all the honey-cakes."

The burdocks stopped moving and soon we heard a loud sniff.

"I'm standing here without any trousers," an angry voice rang out at last, "and there are lots of nettles."

Then, like a giant over the forest, I strode through the burdocks, picked up the serious-looking Fyodor and laid before him all that was left in the haversack.

He slowly gathered everything up into the hem of his shift and without even a "thank you" went to the other end of the garden.

"Huh, what a high-and-mighty little fellow," said Svetlana disapprovingly. "Takes off his trousers and walks about like a lord."

The harnessed pair for the cart drove up to the cottage. Valentina came out on to the porch.

"Get ready, they're good horses. They gallop fast."

Fyodor showed up again. He now had his trousers on and as he ran dragged a pretty smoke-grey kitten by the scruff of the neck. The kitten must have been used to this treatment because it didn't try to break away or mew, merely twisting its fluffy tail impatiently.

"Take it?" said Fyodor as he handed the kitten to Svetlana.

"For keeps?" asked Svetlana, delighted. She glanced at me irresolutely.

"Take it, take it, if you want to," Valentina said. "We've plenty of them. Fyodor, why did you hide the honey-cakes in the cabbage beds? I saw everything through the window."

"I'll hide them somewhere farther away right away," Fyodor comforted her and waddled off like a haughty clumsy little bear-cub.

"The spitting image of his grandad," smiled Valentina. "And getting so strong. He's only four."

We drove along a broad smooth road. Evening was approaching. We met people coming back from work, tired but happy.

A kolkhoz lorry rumbled homewards.

A bugle sounded in the fields.

A bell tinkled in the village.

A mighty train engine whistled beyond the wood. Toot! Toot! . . . Turn, wheels, hurry, wagons, on your long iron road!

And blissfully hugging the fluffy kitten Svetlana sang to the bumpy rhythm of the cart:

*Chiki-chikil
The mice go.
They go with their tails,
Very angry.
They crawl everywhere
Trakh-Tarakh!
And the cup flies.
And who's to blame?
No one's to blame
Except the mice
From the black holes.*

*Good morning, mice!
We've come back.
And what are we bringing
With us?
It mews,
It springs
It drinks milk out of a saucer.
Now hide away
In your black holes
Or you'll be torn
To pieces.
Into ten pieces,
Into twenty pieces,
Into a hundred million
Fluffy little pieces.*

We jumped down from the cart near the mill.

We could hear Pashka Bukamashkin, Sanka, Berta, and someone else playing tip-cat over the fence.

"Don't cheat," Sanka shouted indignantly to Berta. "You said I was doing it and now you're taking too many paces yourselves."

"Someone's taking too many paces over there again," Svetlana explained. "Now there'll probably be another quarrel." And sighing, she added: "What a game!"

Our hearts began to beat faster as we drew near to the house. We had only to turn a corner and walk up the slope.

Suddenly we looked at each other in confusion and stopped.

Neither the dilapidated fence nor the high porch were yet in sight but we could already see the shingled roof of our little grey house, and over it span our lovely shiny whirligig, humming merrily.

"Mummy must have crawled up on to the roof herself," Svetlana screamed and raced ahead.

We went up the slope.

The orange rays of the evening sun lit up the porch. And on it, wearing a red dress, her head uncovered, and sandals on her unstockinged feet, our Marusia stood smiling.

"Laugh, laugh!" Svetlana said graciously as she ran up to the gate. "We've forgiven you already."

I went up too and looked Marusia in the eyes.

Those eyes were hazel brown and they smiled tenderly. You could tell that she had been waiting for us for a long time and that now we had returned she felt really happy.

"No," I decided firmly, touching the scattered fragments of the blue cup with the toe of my boot. "That was all the work of nasty grey mice. And we didn't break it. And Marusia didn't break it either."

And later it was evening. A starry evening with a moon and stars. The three of us sat late in the garden under a well-laden cherry-tree and Marusia told us where she had been, what she had done and whom she had seen.

Svetlana would probably have spun out her own tale till midnight had Marusia not given a start and sent her off to bed.

"Well," Svetlana asked me impishly as she picked up her sleepy kitten. "D'you think life's so bad for us now?"

We rose too.

The golden moon shone over our garden.

A distant train thundered in the north.

A night pilot hummed and hid himself in the clouds.

And life, comrades. . . life was quite wonderful.

1936

*Translated by Ralph Parker
Illustrations by Andrei Livanov*



Samuel MARSHAK

"ENLIGHTENING" BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

DISCUSSING his difficulties in writing books for children, Leo Tolstoy once said: "The very language requires a tremendous amount of work. It must be beautiful, concise, simple, and, above all, clear."

To Tolstoy the writing of books for children was not only an important pedagogical task, it was a new test of his creative power as a writer. The demands he made on himself must remain as an inspiration and a stimulus to all who write books for children.

If the work on the language for children's books seemed "tremendous" to a writer of Tolstoy's giant stature then what efforts must be made by us, writers of today, who serve a much more exacting literature with an "audience" that includes all the young people of a vast country!

One of the most important categories of books for young people is that which adds to the general knowledge of the reader—"enlightening" books, as Gorky called them. They are the companions of the young reader through his childhood and adolescence, broadening his horizons, enriching and enlivening what he learns at school and giving a more definite form to his interests. Textbooks are connected in a child's mind with obligations; "reading books," chosen by the child himself, are objects of love, and they must be worthy of a deep and abiding love for they help him in his choice of profession and evoke in him a love for all creative work.

More than twenty years ago Gorky published an article dealing with subjects in science fiction for children. Gorky considered that the writing of "enlightening" books for children was a task of great importance, and, with his characteristic feeling of personal responsibility, he not only recommended this task to others but laid the first bricks of the edifice he had in mind.

When today you look through the list of subjects suggested by him you cannot but be impressed both by the wide scope and the explicitness of his plans. No matter whether the field suggested was that of chemistry or physics or geography or geochemistry or the history of different cultures, they have all the same aim—

to create in the young reader a well-balanced understanding of the world. But only those books that deal with some really important problem can serve such an aim; and Gorky does not suggest a single theme that does not have its problem. Nor are any of his themes isolated: they group themselves together in galaxies, so to speak.

One of the most important of Gorky's injunctions to children's writers is that they should keep in the forefront of their minds the special problems created by the age of their readers. Otherwise the work simply misses its target; it meets no real need in the mind of either a child or a grown-up.

It is not only fiction that requires an interesting plot to hold the readers' attention: biographies, factual descriptions of discoveries and developments in different sciences or of the building of new works and new towns must all have their own plot more or less clearly indicated.

"There must be no sharp division," Gorky wrote, "between fiction and popular science literature. What must be done to avoid this division? How can we ensure both an effective and an emotional content to enlightening books?"

His answer is: "Science and technology should be pictured not as a store-room of ready-made discoveries and inventions but as the arena of struggle in which man pits his wits against the resistance of material things and of tradition-bound thinking."

In the twenty years since that article appeared, many good "enlightening" books for children have been published. They have met with varying fortunes and enjoyed varying spans of life. Some proved to be "one-day books"; others have literally been handed down from father to son. The earliest casualties have been those that relied on second- or third-hand material into which the life-giving force of original thinking had not been injected.

Our technology develops not day by day but hour by hour and often at a speed that outstrips the printing presses. Thus even books with a wide scope of ideas and informative details fail at times to keep pace with science and the swift changes in the battle of conflicting theories and opinions. Although all books of this kind must bear some of the marks of age, those written by people who are really interested in their subject preserve the freshness of their penetrating observation and originality of thought.

For instance, even today when one opens the books of Academician Fersman—*Tales of Semi-Precious Stones* or *The Popular Mineralogy* or *Popular Geochemistry*—you feel how much knowledge, experience and love for the subject the author has infused into his works. Many of the passages sparkle like the semi-precious stones he describes. Small wonder that books of this kind withstand the test of time.

One can assume, too, that *The World of the Bees* by Iosif Khalifman and Alexander Stefanov will enjoy a long life. It has an unassuming sub-title "Visit to an Apiary," and although every little chapter of it brims with precise information and delicate detail it is by no means a mere collection of fragmentary observations. It leads the reader subtly and entertainingly into the heart of a world whose activities are closely connected with the whole life of Nature.

Illustration to Samuel Marshak's
Absent-Minded.
By Aminodav Kanevsky



Illustration to the Ukrainian folk
tale *The Wolf's Song*.
By Evgeni Rachov



The text and the photographic illustrations work together in carrying out a double task, artistic and scientific.

This double task is ably carried out too in the works of Mikhail Ilyin, who combined the fighting qualities of a campaigning writer, the erudition of a scientist and the romanticism of a poet. That is why his books, such as *Story of a Great Plan*, *Mountains and People* and *Reshaping a Planet*, although written primarily for the children of the Soviet Union, have been read also by adults anxious to learn more about our great projects. Evidence of this can be found in Gorky's preface to the American edition of *Mountains and People*, in letters from Romain Rolland and in Louis Aragon's novel, *The Communists*. As Gorky said: "Ilyin possesses the very rare ability to speak simply and clearly about complex phenomena and matters of deep wisdom."

There is of course a great difference between simplicity, the quality that Gorky demanded of writers, and simplification. The clearness and readability of an "enlightening" book depends on the author's ability to make the abstract concrete, to embody concepts into images, to stimulate perception with the aid of imagination."

Authors of the more important works of science fiction have followed the course charted by Gorky along the paths in which true knowledge, sound philosophical conclusions and the "campaigning spirit" are the guiding principles. The breadth of vision and ideological purposefulness stressed by Gorky are evident in a praiseworthy degree in the best passages of Nikolai Mikhailov's *Across the Map of the U.S.S.R.*

The success of Alexander Studitsky, Pavlov's biographer, and Oleg Pissar-zhevsky, Mendeleyev's biographer, is not entirely due to the fact that these writers gave young readers true pen-pictures of outstanding people of our country: the "vital tendon" of both these books is science, which was the dominant interest in the lives of Pavlov and Mendeleyev.

Not every book that adds to the general knowledge of young readers has its origins in some laboratory or experimental station or scientific expedition. Today productive work is so closely connected with science and technology that a story or reportage about the work of a turner or smelter or miner can find its natural place in youth's library of scientific and technical works. However, in this case the work must be the result of the author's urgent desire to pass on to others his own precious find or "discovery."

For instance, the books of Boris Zhitkov—*What I Saw*, *The Telegram*, *A Ten-Kopeck Piece* and others—are enhanced by the rich experiences of his own varied life. Work itself—intelligent, selfless, absorbed work—is the real hero of his stories of sailors, sea-going hunters, joiners, firemen, stevedores and shipbuilders. How interestingly he wrote about crafts and craftsmen whose life and customs and speech he knew so well. He wrote as one who had not merely a desire but a compulsion to pass on to children—the most insatiable readers—all that he had learned in his travels, his work, his encounters with people in all walks of life, people of all trades and skills.

But Boris Zhitkov belongs not only to the world of science fiction: his is the talent of a tireless, open-hearted teller of stories.

There are, however, works written in a completely different manner, works without characters or dialogue and with no claims to be fictional. Some of them have a purely practical function, even, at times, an instructional one. Among them, too, you will be able to separate the wheat from the chaff—those on which years of labour and experience and thinking have been expended and those that have taken only a bottle of ink or a couple of typewriter-ribbons to produce.

Judged by their aim and the kind of thinking that has gone into their making, Evgeni Spangenberg's *Notes of a Naturalist* and Nikolai Verzhilin's *The Travels of Household Plants* are very different books, but in each you are conscious of the rich scientific resources of the author and of his love for his chosen subject—a natural, infectious love which communicates itself to the reader.

That explains, too, the long years of success enjoyed by such books as *Forest Newspaper* by Vitali Bianki, a highly original "encyclopedia" of forest life, and the welcome that readers have given to the fresh and talented nature-stories by a young writer, Nikolai Sladkov.

The "entertainment-value" of these books varies. Some of them—especially those with a plot developed along fiction-like lines—appeal to any reader: others are kept and treasured only by those young readers who have already acquired a special interest in a given subject, such as mineralogy, botany or zoology.

An intermediate place between these two categories is occupied by books built on the principles of a "learn while you play." And why not? Children can learn much in a game—but only when the game element and the knowledge-giving element are given in the correct proportions and do not work at cross purposes.

How does Fersman, for instance, solve the problem of making his books serve their educative aim and at the same time remain entertaining? He shows the reader the past, present and future march of science and the links between science and technology and between art and science. He takes the reader with him over the length and breadth of our country and deep under its surface in the searches for treasures. He gives us the epic of the earth's crust and the life-story of the precious and semi-precious stones. He can tell in the same story about the discoveries of paleontology and about the most immediate tasks of modern industry.

And what is entertaining in Ivan Efremov's works? Although they are scientific fantasies they seem to be permeated with lively, tense, poetic thinking. In them true science and daring fantasy march side by side. And his fantasy is daring just because it rests firmly upon the exacting work of a scientist which gives one the strongest possible grip upon reality. How many days and nights must one spend in a laboratory, how many miles must one cover step by step across sands and mountain rocks and ice to find those minute details that give a story its ring of conviction and create a true, clear picture of reality!

Books of this kind show how much can be caught by the eye of an artist, especially when he has the advantage of experience in scientific observation. That is a point that needs to be developed. An author or artist who wants to bring out the characteristic, distinguishing features of any landscape he has seen would do well to borrow from the scientists their efficient observation, their exactness and their sense of purpose. When that is done no passage of description would be mere padding that the reader could skip without loss. The landscape passages in the works of the writer-traveller Vladimir Arsenyev or of Alexander Fersman never pall.

In Efremov's work, too, we read with great interest the description of a small caravan of men and reindeers fighting its way over the broken ice of a river whose wild strength remained untamed even at fifty degrees below zero. Every detail of the landscape takes on a special importance because of our natural human interest in the survival of these people to whom one false step on the sloping ice-blocks meant a fall to certain death in the swirling rapids below.

When we read passages like these we are bound to think about the great experiences encountered in the many expeditions throughout our vast country, expeditions composed of a great variety of people—scientists, students, local hunters and others. This gives to Soviet literature a store of "raw material"—magnificent, real-life material—beyond the dreams of those writers who have to think up the wildest adventures while sitting at their desks.

And this material is not confined to an author's observation or discovery of the wonders or the secrets of nature; it includes also the new traits of human character that are to be observed in times of great labour and struggle against the forces of nature.

*P*ROFILES

Kornei ZELINSKY

STORY-TELLER, CRITIC AND SCHOLAR

The books of Kornei Chukovsky are among the best-sellers in the Soviet Union. Illustrated by the most noted artists these books are the favourite presents of those who have only just learned to speak. Parents read his amusing stories aloud—and the characters of his tales become companions of the young folk for life.

Some months ago when literary circles were celebrating Chukovsky's 70th birthday a well-known professor of medicine said to him as a joke:

"So you're the man who is such a nuisance to me."

"I hope not because you've had to waste your time coming to this party tonight?"

"Not at all. But whenever I come home my grandchildren give me no rest: they insist on my reading your poems to them. Aloud! I have to act the part of your kind Doctor Aibolit and they bring home stray cats for me to cure."

But Chukovsky is not only a writer for children.

I find it difficult to say which is the chief line in Chukovsky's work. At first sight the scope of his interests and occupations seems boundless: on the one hand, gay children's verse with all kinds of twists of fancy, on the other hand, the most scrupulous research on writers of the past. He has drawn to his books readers of all ages—from two to seventy-five. In this original writer are combined the artist and the scholar, the story-teller and the humorist, the critic and the literary-portrait painter of other writers.

What kind of unity is formed by this conglomeration of so many different talents? What is the spring in which Chukovsky dips his words to draw them out sparkling or cutting, always so witty and unexpected? It seems to me that this spring is that precious feeling of creating something new that a child has



Kornei Chukovsky

and which everyone experiences when he is learning to talk, when he is giving names to things and events in the world around him. I can detect this feeling in all Chukovsky's genres—in his articles, poems, essays, tales and scientific studies.

Among Kornei Chukovsky's many books there is one which may be considered most characteristic. This is *From Two to Five*, which is dedicated to the peculiarities of children's speech. It is a book about the child as a tireless researcher, philosopher, and creator who is forming his own world in games and absurdities. It is a book about how one plunges into the ocean of one's own tongue. That book, if you like, is the authour's literary self-portrait. It could have been written only by Chukovsky, the writer who as the very principle of his art combines fun and seriousness, merriment and criticism.

As young man armed with this gift of uncommonly lively verbal sensitivity, Chukovsky entered the literary arena in the early years of the present century. He possessed the ability of creating funny situations. The first of his feuilletons which he sent to the paper *Odesskiye Novosti* was accepted for publication. Expelled from school for being the "son of a cook,"¹ Chukovsky taught himself to read English at a library. Not to speak it but to read it. And so the *Odesskiye Novosti* sent the young Chukovsky to London as its correspondent. He returned to Odessa in 1905 at the time when the cruiser *Potemkin* sailed to the Grafski Jetty flying a red flag. Together with Boris Zhitkov, a sailor and traveller who later became a juvenile writer too, Chukovsky took part in relief work for the heroic sailors of the *Potemkin*, sponsored by the working people of Odessa.

A little later Chukovsky went to St. Petersburg, and we find him publishing the satirical magazine *Signal*. The satirical shafts launched at the tsar and his ministers were soon noticed. Chukovsky was arrested and *Signal* closed down.

A long period of reaction set in. I recall the Kornei Chukovsky of those years, a writer whose name was associated with the most caustic and stinging and, at the same time, merriest critics and feuilleton writers of the times.

A best-selling children's writer named Lydia Charskaya simply ceased to exist as an author after an article in which Chukovsky with a rapier-like thrust exposed all her philistinism. After an article by Chukovsky devoted to his semi-pornographic novel *Sanin* the author Artsybashev tried to challenge the writer to a duel.

It should be added that while touching his contemporaries to the quick Chukovsky knew how to turn his magnifying glass on himself. There lay his strength. More and more frequently he left the ring of verbal fencing for the earnest calm of reading-rooms to study material about outstanding Russian men of letters, particularly the poet Nekrasov.

¹ In 1887 a circular of the Minister of Education Delyanov, a notorious reactionary, recommended that "the children of coachmen, lackeys, cooks, etc." should not be accepted in secondary schools.

Chukovsky's first article about Nekrasov appeared nearly half a century ago, and since then the subject had inspired him and constantly possessed him. From Chukovsky's works on Nekrasov alone one could write a substantial book about what happened to people of our generation after the October Revolution. Of Kornei Chukovsky it may be said that the Revolution had a purifying influence in cleansing his work of all petty features introduced for the sake of journalistic effects. The Revolution gave a new ideological direction to his gifts.

The first Soviet edition of Nekrasov was prepared and carefully commented by Chukovsky. But for Chukovsky that was only a start. In order to understand Nekrasov anew and, indeed, to understand everything anew, Chukovsky set about studying Lenin. He read the complete works of Lenin from beginning to end. He read, pencil in hand, for over a year, and that reading of Lenin's works threw a new light for him upon the real meaning of Nekrasov's poetry and enabled him to see features in it which till then had remained in the shade. As a result Kornei Chukovsky in *The Skill of Nekrasov* was able to reveal Nekrasov's many historico-literary connections with his period and the skill and power of the great poet's pen. This book has gained a place of honour among the fundamental works of Soviet literary research workers.

But in addition to the works on Nekrasov with which Chukovsky's name will always be associated we could mention at least five more of his books. They are his "children's" volume, his study of the writers of the 1840-1860 period, known as *People and Books*, his excellent essay on Walt Whitman, Chesterton and many other foreign writers, his volume of critical articles and, finally, the volume of reminiscences and literary portraits.

I personally am specially fond of Kornei Chukovsky's reminiscences and literary portraits. The past runs before our eyes, but we do not thumb the pages with the feeling that we are looking at a herbarium of dried flowers. Here everything appears to be alive and vigorous and still full of breath. He knew many authors personally, among them Wells and Alexander Blok, Kuprin and Mayakovsky, Chekhov and Conan Doyle, Bunin and Alexei Tolstoy. Reading his recently-published essay *Anton Chekhov* one sees how profound his understanding of people and life became and what fine literary portraits are drawn by his pen.

Chukovsky shows the same originality in his poems for children. His first tale in verse—*The Crocodile*—was directed polemically against the sentimental and false "works for children" which teemed like weeds in juvenile literature before the Revolution. Chukovsky wrote this tale after meeting Maxim Gorky in 1916. "After that first meeting with Gorky," he writes in his memoirs, "I decided to be bold: I began a poem for children aimed at the literary canons then prevailing in children's literature. Hitherto I had never dared to do a thing like that." Chukovsky wrote his best works for children after the October Revolution. These included the tales *Moidodyr*, *The Enormous Cockroach*, *The Bumble Fly*, *Barmalei*. In these works bold fantasy and humor are combined with poetic moral and with a tactful and unobtrusive edification.

By 1957 the total print of Chukovsky's works for children exceeded thirty million copies.

Chukovsky has also done much for children as a translator. He translated *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain and paraphrased *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*.

In *From Two to Five* Chukovsky makes a very true observation to the proving of which he devotes a special chapter—that children's speech is naturally based on the laws of folk speech, that children's neologisms are always attuned to the linguistic creations of the people and are sometimes not inferior to the discoveries of prominent masters of language.

From children and folklore Chukovsky borrowed the "freshness and aptness of idiom, his play on words, his love of tales and, finally, his inexhaustible humour and zest for happiness. He makes children a present of laughter, easily wipes away their childish tears and opens widely before them the gates of a vast world of joy.

I confess that I do not like it when somebody who has survived a test of age and reached his jubilee is praised for being young. Youth by itself cannot be a criterion of human value. But about Chukovsky I must say his youth and, above all, the freshness of his child-like attitude to the world lies at the very kernel of his talent and combines everything created by this pathfinder in the realm of facts and wizard of language into one multiform world.

SAMUEL MARSHAK

SAMUEL Marshak is one of the founders of Soviet literature for children. His fairy-tales, verses, nursery rhymes, songs, and charming stories in verse have been read and enjoyed by several generations of Soviet children whose first acquaintance ripens into an ardent affection, one that continues when the children grow up and get to know Marshak as the author of poetry for grown-ups.

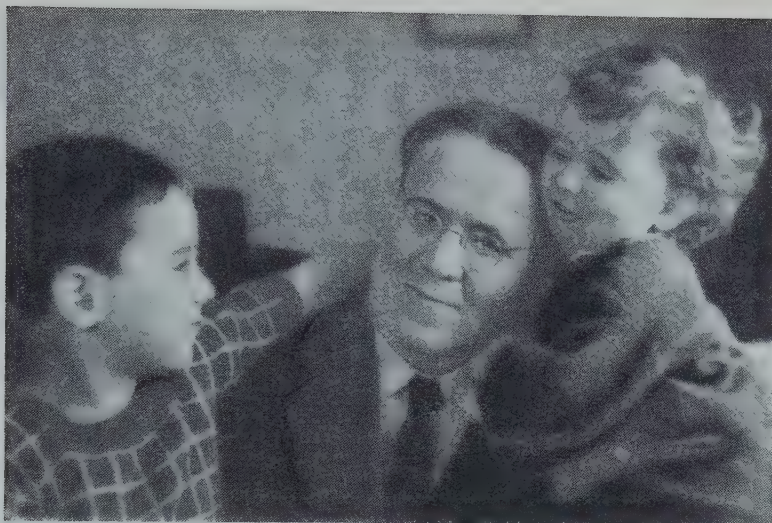
The scope of Marshak's talent is most impressive: he is a profound interpreter of Shakespeare, but has also written verses to accompany a picture depicting an elephant trying on a pair of baby shoes; he has translated Burns' *For a' that and a' that* with its flaming social protest, and at the same time he is the author of merry verses for children which tell the story of the circus lady who runs along a taut wire like a telegraph message. . . .

With all their variety, these writings have one feature in common—their clear, happy, and optimistic approach to life.

His long experience as a poet for children, his close ties with his young readers, who should rather be called his young listeners, have enabled Marshak to develop a simple, lucid and forceful style. The readers he writes for do not tolerate the vague or the abstract, for their own speech is full of expressiveness and is immediately translated into action. Marshak has always used a clear-cut, concrete and incisive style and avoids generalities which evoke no associations in his readers' minds. His topics, composition, and rhythms are marked by force and lucidity.

Marshak's short stories in verse always consist of merry episodes following one another in close succession. His verse is dynamic to a degree, with its heroes continually on the move, doing things and going places.

Travels into the unknown play an important part in Marshak's poetry which opens for the little reader a window into the great, unknown world and encourages him to take part in the action of the story. When he reads Marshak, the child can imagine himself now a postman with a heavy mail bag making his rounds, now a fireman on a red fire-engine answering a call. *The Postman* not only tells the reader how letters reach destinations in all parts of the world, but teaches the importance of devotion to duty. Each chapter of this highly popular work is a complete story in itself, which delights us with its variety of metre and the unexpected turns of the theme. This is fully in keeping with the psychology of the young reader who dislikes humdrum and drab speech and revels in happenings and adventures. *The Postman* abounds in jingles, riddles, and the pleasing couplets to be met in folk songs for children.



Samuel Marshak with his grandchildren

The style of Marshak's books for children has developed under the influence of both children's and adult folklore, as well as of such models as the energetic and terse verse of Pushkin's immortal fairy-tales which were not written for children, but appeal to the most junior of readers. Marshak was fortunate that in his youth he met such connoisseurs of folk poetry as Vladimir Stasov and Maxim Gorky, who from the outset called Marshak's attention to the treasure house of Russian folklore. The young poet's first volumes of verse showed what a wealth of magic discoveries poetry for children can make in the national folklore.

Marshak began to write for children with the firm conviction that books for tiny tots form part of serious poetry and call for bold searchings and happy discoveries, that the difference between poetry for children and poetry for grown-ups lies in the former's possessing its own laws, and strict laws too, in addition to the general rules governing poetical writing.

Marshak has found a way to talk to the child on social, political and ethical problems simply, clearly and entertainingly. In doing so, he has not been afraid to teach the child, to write of the difference between right and wrong, and create characters for the child to model his behaviour on. At the bottom of Marshak's popularity with his young readers is the fact that what he writes has a gay lilt to it, that behind his gaiety and facility of expression there is a living and telling moral, but such that has no dull moralizing or platitudes to it.

He has also found a way to impress upon the youngest of his readers respect and love for human reason; he makes them see the dignity of man's labour and

how essential it is in the world, and shows them that the working man is the creator of all values.

Marshak's verses are marked by a wide variety of subject. Racial and national discord forms the topic of his pungent satire *Mister Twister*; *The War with the Dnieper* deals with the wonderful industrial transformation of the Soviet land; *Field Post* tells of the tragic events of the war, without the least concealment or embellishment; in *Fact and Fiction* the author speaks of the historical significance of the October Revolution. It is set in the form of a talk between an old workman and a group of Young Pioneers, in the course of which the past is re-created, as it were. The author's presence is not sensed in the least, and all the talking is done by those in the story. The old worker's tale is interspersed with old concepts and details of which present-day children have no idea, and evoke laughter, surprise, and even distrust among the young listeners. All this goes to stress the tremendous changes that have taken place in the country and lends vividness and naturalness to the transition from the social theme to the lyrical and the comical.

While boldly displaying the author's political sympathies, the work has no didactical sermonizing about it, but helps to mould the political consciousness of the growing generation, their character, outlook and emotions.

Though written after the late war, this story contains themes and motives of many of Marshak's earlier works. It was no accident that Mayakovsky, who in the early twenties so boldly led poetry for children out of its narrow confines on to the wide social arena, considered Marshak a comrade in the struggle for new merry books for children. From the reminiscences of Mayakovsky's friends we know what joy he derived from Marshak's books for children and how often he would quote from them.

Marshak's rich creative experience reminds us in the most convincing manner that there are no themes beyond the child's understanding. The opinion was long current that books for tiny tots should deal with general problems of morals and ethics, but leave the facts of everyday life alone. Right and wrong, black and white were presented as some absolute categories common to all times. Marshak's narrative is always concrete and tangible; the parable he takes up bears the impress of our day and its interests and does so in an undisguised way. There is nothing of the once-upon-a-time approach. An example is the conceited *Mister Twister* with his contempt for the customs of other lands. Although the story is directed against definite things and ideas, it has nothing of the sermonizing that children find so unpalatable.

Marshak was among those poets who turned their attention to the new themes and images brought forward by the Soviet way of life, and helped to determine the road Soviet poetry for children was to follow from its very inception. A new kind of content came into children's books, born of a keen perception of the new life, and love and respect for the common man and his creative labour, qualities that marked the poetry of Mayakovsky and Marshak, the prose of Gaidar and Zhitkov and the generation of writers that followed them.

Marshak has written not only verses and songs for children, satire, and epigrams. He is the author of *Lyrical Notebook* with its wealth of deep meditation and has translated Shakespeare's sonnets, Wordsworth, Browning and Burns. Even when his thoughts turn to subjects like the brevity of man's span of life, which makes him know the bitterness of losing those he holds dear, his poems are full of light and a love of life. The whips and scorns of time not only make his vision keener and more discerning, but give him a deeper appreciation of the beauty of the world around us. This joy of life and freshness of its perception abound in his verse, tales and merry jokes. Indeed, his biggest book for tiny tots is entitled *A Merry Journey from A to Z*, and the little reader or listener really enjoys travelling with the author from letter to letter which come to life under Marshak's happy pen.

December last the Soviet reading public paid tribute to Samuel Marshak on the occasion of his seventieth birthday and the half-century of his literary activities. All three aspects of his poetry—his verses for children, his translations of the poetry of other lands, and his original lyrics, serve a single cause—the inculcation in the reader, from his early years, of feelings and ideas of truth, good and justice. The poet's talent and inspired pen have won him the love and admiration of readers both young and old, who read and re-read everything he writes, and learn his words by heart, for they do indeed make life finer, merrier and full of interest.



Gianni Rodari

Lev KASSIL and Sergei MIKHALKOV

OUR FRIEND, GIANNI RODARI

He lives in Rome, in a tiny flat on the Largo Oriani, this man we had planned to visit long before we actually set foot on Italian soil. Our readers too were most anxious that we meet him. When on the eve of our departure we asked the Moscow Young Pioneers what they wanted us to do first in Italy they chorussed: "See Rodari, Gianni Rodari, and give him our love!"

We had never met Rodari, but we had long regarded him as our friend and colleague. Besides, his name is familiar to every schoolchild in our country. They have heard the radio production of his story about the little onion-boy Cipollino. They have

read his delightful verses put out by the Publishing House for Juvenile Literature. Even we adults enjoy those verses describing the colour and the smell of the different trades, and what the big world looks like from the shoe-black's stand on the pavement and from the towering eminence of a crane.

And so our first thought on arriving in Rome was to find Rodari.

Our Italian friends telephoned to Rodari for us and we agreed to meet them and there outside the entrance of one of Rome's big cinemas. Half an hour later we were driving over to our rendezvous. We recognized him at once. He was standing outside the brightly-lit entrance, looking very much like his photographs.

We sprang out of the car almost before it had stopped, ran over to him and seizing both his hands began pumping them vigorously, babbling a mixture of *buona sera* and the Russian *zdravstvuite*. Rodari was a little taken aback by this sudden attack by two burly Russians—we are both rather oversized to put it mildly, while Gianni Rodari is rather slight of build and looks much younger than his 36 years. But a few minutes later we were driving all together through the evening streets of Rome on our way to supper in a little restaurant on the other side of the Tiber.

It was a quaint little place patronized chiefly by sailors and fishermen. There were fish nets in place of curtains on the windows and doors, and a real ship's anchor at the entrance. We sat for a long time at a little table in a quiet corner of the restaurant. It was snowing heavily outside. It rarely snows at all in Rome but this was a regular blizzard. Our Italian friends declared that we Russians had brought our native weather with us to Italy. As for us, sitting there talking to Rodari and watching the blizzard outside, we really began to feel that we were somewhere in Moscow instead of in sunny Italy with Rodari as our guest.

We liked Rodari at once. He speaks quietly and at first appears to be somewhat slow and reserved, especially if one compares him to his quick, voluble, excitable and gesticulating compatriots. He has a shy, gentle expression and slightly drooping eyelids. But when you talk to him for a while you realize that his shy, reserved appearance is deceptive. Behind that soft voice and gentle expression is the keen and lively mind of an artist who knows what his people are

Illustrations to Rodari's "*Cipollino*."
By Vladimir Suteyev.



striving for and whose every word, spoken or printed, is calculated to help them achieve their goal.

We gave him the volumes of his verses translated into Russian by Samuel Marshak. We also presented him with the handsome new edition of *Cipollino* put out by the Publishing House for Juvenile Literature in Moscow. We told him how popular his books are with our children. He shrugged his shoulders and looked embarrassed.

A baker's son who grew up "among sacks of flour and coal," as he puts it, Rodari has remained loyal to his class. He has a gift of talking to children about the serious aspects of life with a gentle humour tinged at times with bitter frankness. He takes delight in the skill of the labouring man, he sympathizes with the poor, detests idlers and loafers and believes that it is possible to win happiness for all children on earth. That is why our Soviet children are so fond of his rhymed stories, his *Fisherman* and *Tinker*, his *Street-Sweeper* and *Little Ciccio* who lives in a squalid cellar beside a dust-hole, and *The Boy from Modena* who never smiled again because he had seen the shooting down of strikers, and the Neapolitan lad who went blind from lack of light in the gloomy corners of the sunniest city in the world.

We told Rodari that his books are published in millions of copies in our country, and that the Moscow schoolchildren had made us promise to look him up first thing in Italy, even before we visited St. Peters, or the Coliseum or the Venice canals. At this, Rodari suddenly jumped lightly on to a chair, crossed his hands comically on his chest in the pose of a statue and said jestingly



"Monumento." That was his way of putting an end to the flood of praise which he found so embarrassing.

A former school-teacher, Rodari now edits a youth magazine *Avanguardia*, a job which consumes a great deal of time and energy and leaves him little time for his poetry.

He had to take three weeks' holiday from the magazine in order to write *Cipollino* he told us. The tale had been conceived long before that, and he had even written the first chapter. But he needed more time to finish it. He spent his holiday in a village in the home of a peasant who refused to take any money from him for board and lodging. Gianni must not worry about anything, he must only write. The poet set to work at once. The whole village knew that he had come to work, and everyone was greatly interested in what he was doing. The family Rodari stayed with kept a jealous eye on their lodger and saw to it that he did not waste his time. If for some reason he did not sit down to work immediately after breakfast, the children outside would call to him: "Gianni, get to work! Don't dawdle!"

When the hundredth page of the tale was finished, Gianni's host gave a party and invited half the village. He wanted everyone to see that his lodger had not spent his time in vain. The little cottage was packed with guests of all ages. Rodari read them his *Cipollino*, which was universally approved. That is how Rodari wrote his tale about the little onion-boy, which has become favourite reading for children in many countries.

In the same village Rodari overheard a peasant telling the children the story



of each king, queen, jack, ace and six in a pack of cards. This gave him the idea for his story *The Talking Cards*.

Busy though he is with work on the magazine, Rodari manages to find time to write new books. He recently published a tale entitled *The Adventures of Scarabocchio* about a little man drawn in charcoal on the wall, and another about *The Land of Christmas Trees*. Besides this, the *Unità* publishes his answers to children's letters every week. Though written in a humourous vein, these brief, witty replies contain much that is instructive for the youngsters.

You will not find any mention of Rodari's work in the Italian press. That is why so many Italian children, and their parents too, are still convinced that the popular verses about the knife-grinder who carries a wheel on his shoulders but himself goes on foot, and the tale of *Cipollino* are not the work of a modern poet but folk verse. The Italian people love to compose those short, pithy, whimsical verses known as *filastrocca* rhymes. Rodari's verses are written in the style of *filastrocca* rhymes, for like any true poet Rodari endeavours to write verse that is close to the people. That explains why many Italians believe Rodari's poetry to be actually folk poetry. Rodari might well be proud that the people recognize his work as their own.

Before leaving Rome we spent another evening with Gianni. We told him that we would be returning home in time for Children's Book Week, a most fitting occasion to tell our children all about our meetings with their favourite Italian author.

"Tell them about Italy, please," said Gianni Rodari. "If your children really know me as you say, then please convey my warmest regards to them from Rome."





W

RITERS
and
ARTISTS
FORUM

Evgeni RACHOV

THE ART WORK OF CHILDREN

Evgeni Rachov is a well-known Soviet graphic artist who illustrates books for children. He has also made a series of drawings for Saltykov-Shchedrin's satirical *Fables* and those of Sergei Mikhalkov. Some of his work appeared in issue No.8, 1955, of our journal.

Rachov has won the recognition of the Soviet public not only by his artistic talent but also by his profound love for children, who comprise his largest audience. It is this latter fact which prompted us to ask Evgeni Rachov to tell us what he thinks of the art work of his little friends.

A LITTLE boy was drawing a picture of a dog that had wanted to bite him when he was playing about in the yard. While drawing the picture the child recalled the terror he had then felt and the bared teeth of that vicious dog. And wishing to express his feelings as vividly as possible he himself began to growl as the dog had growled. While doing so the motions of his hand became sharper and the paper tore, with the result that the drawing was all in holes. But he had achieved the effect he desired: he had drawn not "any" dog but the particular dog he had wanted, that vicious animal which had tried to bite him.

It is probably such things that underlie the beginning of art.

Needless to say, not all children are equally gifted, and an ability to feel the artistic in life does not necessarily turn into talent. But among children it is this very feeling which helps them solve the tasks of art.

Before the professional, adult artist can undertake a real work of art there are many things he must know: he must be able to draw, an ability which is acquired only after many years of persistent work; he must have a good mastery of colour, must know the laws of perspective and the properties of materials, etc., etc., etc. Children, on the other hand, set about painting or drawing the most difficult landscapes, portraits, and large compositions without any doubt whatever as to their abilities. The results of their work are sometimes so good, so complete in their own way, that they are more pleasing to the eye than many compositions by adult artists in whom rules and ability have replaced the necessary quality of feeling.

Some artists like to stress and emulate the primitive in children's drawings and folklore. But in their work these "primitivists" restrict themselves merely to borrowing what is superficial and decorative in the children's drawings and folklore, discarding what is most valuable, the vividness and richness of their feeling.

Not long ago simultaneous exhibitions of Western art and English children's drawings were held in Moscow. Here one had an opportunity to compare and see how superb the children's work was with all its limitations, and how incompetent were the attempts of the "primitivists" to transfer, mechanically, all the charm of the children's work to adult art. It resulted in the professional artists resorting to stylization, and such stylization is but an attempt to live at the expense of someone else's talent.

Children of various ages draw in various ways. When they are but two or three years old they have to master the intricate process of co-ordinating the movements of their wrists and fingers. Beginning by making wide strokes that cover the entire sheet of paper, they gradually learn to make finer lines and then to draw ovals, squares, etc. But as yet they draw objectlessly. The next stage is that of drawing objects. True, Daddy, Mama, and the author of the drawing differ only in size, yet that is a great step forward when compared with the objectless lines that preceded. Little by little the drawings of the children become more intricate. They try to represent motion, attempt to show some connection between the various objects they portray. The composition becomes more complex. It becomes necessary not only to draw objects and people on a sheet of white paper, but against some landscape, some background. However, in order to show objects in space so that one will appear closer and another further off, one must have a knowledge of perspective. What is to be done if the object in the foreground covers up the one in back of it? At a certain age the children solve this problem by drawing all the objects in the foreground smaller, and those further away—larger, so that they will be seen. Thus their sense of perspective is just the reverse, and only later, gradually, do they begin to fathom the laws of linear perspective.

Beginning with primary, objectless strokes, the art of children continues to grow and becomes more intricate, finally developing into professional portrayal if, of course, the person has decided to devote himself to art. Usually the children, as they grow up, lose their ability to draw or their interest in drawing and,



Illustration to Pushkin's "Tale of the Pope and His Workman Balda." By Georgi Bogdanov (Nine).



"Snow Maiden." By Natasha Lapteva (Eleven).

as regards their development in this field of endeavour, remain at the level of children although they may be highly skilled workers in their chosen fields. And that is a pity, for all of us can learn to draw intelligently, an ability which would be of great value to many in their everyday work. While only those people would develop into artists who are truly talented.

It is the duty of us adults to encourage the natural desire of children to create so that as they grow older their art may become more intricate, keeping pace with their physical and mental development.

There was one particular quality about the exhibition of English children's art, mentioned above, which produced a very deep impression on me with its fine, large, striking drawings.

The drawings of the 10- and 11-year-olds often impressed me as being similar, in composition, to those of the 6- and 7-year-old children. But it is impossible that these children had not changed in these 3-4 years just as all children do. It seemed to me that someone, obviously the teachers, in trying to stress the charm of the children's primitive drawing, at a certain stage retarded the art of the children in order to preserve their rudimentary charm despite all the demands of their natural ages. But isn't this unnatural? No matter how we should like to do so, we cannot retard the physical and intellectual growth of a child, for that would lead to monstrosity. Suppose we heard a twelve-year-old youngster lisping like a toddler. Our immediate reaction would be one of repulsion even though we realized that it is the people who are rearing him who are responsible for it, and not the child himself.

There was another feature in the artistic upbringing of children, which struck the eye in the exhibition of the art work of Indian children. The Indian

teachers, interested in developing their national school of art, whose distinguishing features are painting in planes and exquisite colouring, teach even the very youngest children to draw in the national canonical manner. This could be seen in the themes, which were often repeated, and in the similar approach by different children. It seems to me that, when instilling in children a taste and love for national forms in art, one must be extremely careful, so as not to destroy in children their own individual traits. Their exhibition, taken as a whole, was exceptionally interesting. The children had created drawings of amazing beauty. Many Moscow artists, myself included, visited the exhibition repeatedly in order to remember the fascinating colour harmonies (in other words, to learn something from them).

I am not a teacher by profession and I am therefore unable to say what methods should be employed in teaching children to draw. But one thing is clear to me: children develop harmoniously and that is reflected in their art.

Some people are surprised at the fact that many outstanding artists of the Soviet Union, in greater or lesser degree, illustrate children's literature. But there is nothing unusual in that. As in every normal family, we are accustomed to giving the best to our children. Should the reader ever have occasion to visit the small towns of the Soviet Union, he will find that some of the finest buildings in these towns are children's institutions—their schools, kindergartens, nurseries, and Houses of Pioneers. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that some of the finest artists work as illustrators of children's books. It cannot be otherwise since the children are our future; they will live under better social conditions than we do and they should be better than we are.

The Moscow Pioneer House

This is one of the 2,154 Pioneer Houses in the Soviet Union. Every sizeable town in the country has one or two, or even more Pioneer Houses. There are 25 such houses in Moscow alone.

Everything here is suited to the interests of the children. Everything, that is, except the banisters. The builders clearly overlooked one highly popular form of juvenile sport when they decorated the banisters with a series of wooden knobs. A safety precaution no doubt!

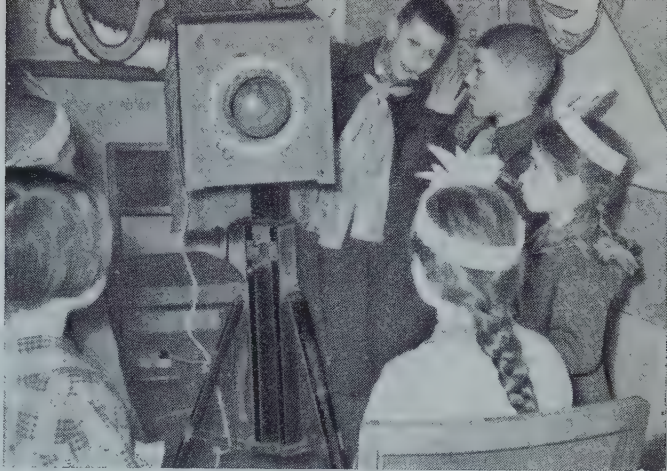
At any rate the group of youngsters trooping noisily past me up the stairs seemed to have something more interesting to do than slide down banisters.

"What's going on here today?" I asked as they dashed past me laughing and chattering. But they didn't hear me. Out of their excited babble I caught a phrase that sounded like: "Hurry up, they're going to shoot the telephone!" But that sounded too fantastic, and so I restrained the impulse to follow them and went my way.

THE MYSTERY SOLVED

It turned out, however, that I had not misheard.

As I reached the first storey landing I noticed an electric cable running across the



In the room of unmiraculous miracles.

figured tile floor into one of the doors. Inside I heard somebody shout: "Attention! Ready! Camera!"

Pushing the door open, I found myself looking into a large room. Several youngsters were fussing with a movie camera and spotlights in the middle and another group was whispering to one another on a row of chairs lined up against one of the walls. It now dawned on me what the "shooting of the telephone" was all about. This was the drama circle staging a popular children's game "Telephone." The young actors told me that after this trial sketch they planned a more serious attempt at film-making: a real picture based on some short story.

The young cameramen insisted on showing me the newsreels they had made. One of them was a film record of a hiking tour made by members of the tourist group during the summer.

The picture opened with a group of boys and girls carrying rucksacks walking down a forest trail. Then the crossing of a river over a rope bridge—a real cross-country hiker has to be able to negotiate the toughest mountain streams! Not that the stream we see in the film is a very turbulent one—indeed

Reportage

it is no more than a brook one could easily jump across. Nevertheless the rope bridge is rigged up and the crossing begins. Six youngsters at once clamber on to it—and tumble into the water amidst merry shrieks of laughter.

The real pathfinder must know a great deal about forest lore, and this includes elementary hydrology as well. And so we see two girls wading knee-deep to judge of the speed of the current by watching a sliver of wood carried along by the water.

Then there is a bathing episode. One after another the boys dive into the water. Now what is this? A pair of feet come up from the water to be followed by the legs and the rest of the body, and the diver describes an arc legs first to land on his feet on the shore! The film-makers have inserted this reversed bit in a playful mood.

The other picture was a serious one, devoted to adults. It was taken at a Moscow factory and showed some production processes.

As I watched these films I could not help wondering whether one day I should not meet again these young actors, directors and cameramen on the regular, "adult" screen. For a good many former members of the Pioneer House film group have already become professional cinema workers.

FUTURE AIRCRAFT ENGINEERS

The aeroplane model workshop was seething with activity. One lad was winding up a tiny rubber-band engine, another was bent in intense concentration over a drawing board, a third with a faraway expression on his face was working on some complicated mathematical problem. In the middle of the room stood a pioneer holding something that looked like a sail attached to a mast. A propeller revolved at the lower

end of the mast. The boy released the "sail" and it began to rise slowly—it was a new model of a helicopter with a pushing propeller instead of the usual pulling type.

I was shown all sorts of models made by the members of this circle, a good number of whom were winners of U.S.S.R. and International aeroplane model contests.

About 140 youngsters belong to the various sections of the aeroplane model workshop. The most interesting section of course is the experimental. Here the youngsters develop their inventive ability. Naturally, not all the inventions are successful, but how proud is the lad who does succeed in making something new!

SAILORS AND SHIPBUILDERS

These too you can find at the Moscow Pioneer House.

The young sailors make a study of a real marine engine, the design of ships, the intricacies of rigging, signalling at sea, and of course sails. In summer they make long cruises in rowboats, motor launches and yachts. Many of them will no doubt in time enroll at navigation schools.

In the shipbuilding workshop you will be shown radio-controlled models of ships that can raise anchor, cast off from moorings, pick up speed and manoeuvre in response to signals from the distance, not to mention the signal lights and searchlights on board that actually work. Now the youngsters are building a model designed to respond to a total of eighty commands. Very interesting too are submarines that submerge to a set depth, cruise under water for a certain distance, and then again come up to the surface.

As for the youngsters working on all these fascinating models, they all dream of building real ships some day.

UNMIRACULOUS MIRACLES

I pushed open a door with this inscription and found myself in the midst of a crowd of youngsters. One of them shoved what looked like an old-fashioned duelling pistol in my hand while two others shouted in my ear:

"You'll never be able to hit the spider! Try and you'll see!"

I aimed the pistol at the repulsive black spider that served as the target, wondering what practical joke the youngsters around me had up their sleeve.

As I pulled the trigger, I involuntarily closed my eyes for a fraction of a second expecting a thundering report. But there was no sound at all, nothing but a flash of light next to the spider.

"You missed it, you missed it!" chanted the boys and girls.

I tried again and again until at last the ray of light emitted by the pistol hit the spider square on the back, whereupon a bell rang and a screen over the target lit up. The whole secret lay in a photoelectric cell actuated by the light from the pistol.

Another miracle that awaited me here was the Magic Gingerbread Ball—the very same that ran away from Grandad and Granny in the children's tale—suspended from a string just inside the door of a log cabin. You were expected to try to seize it, which you could never do; here too a photoelectric cell registered the approach of your hand and removed the gingerbread ball to a safe distance.

Next to the log cabin two Sputniks whirled about an ordinary school globe, and a bit



Sculpture is a serious business.

farther down the room a doll was flying a model aeroplane attached to a string.

Even the lampshades in that room were unusual. Set in motion by the currents of warm air from the lamps, they spun around casting weird shadows on the walls.

Needless to say, all these "miracles" had been made by the youngsters themselves.

INTERVIEW WITH THE WHITE RIBBON

Heads dark and light, close-cropped and pig-tailed, bent intently over drawings. Next to a little girl with a big white ribbon in her hair stood the instructor, patiently explaining to her that in a face drawn in profile both eyes cannot be looking straight out at you.

With the instructor's permission, I asked the youngsters what they liked best in their art classes.

"Collective drawing," replied White Ribbon without a moment's hesitation.

This was something new to me.

"Collective drawing? What's that?" I asked.

It had all started after a joint reading of *The Little Humpback Horse*, White Ribbon explained. Everybody liked it, and it was decided to draw pictures illustrating the story. One of the boys suggested taking a big sheet of paper and drawing everything in the tale: the Humpback Horse carrying Ivanushka, and the Whale swimming in the sea, and the King jumping into the cauldron of boiling water. The idea appealed to all, and a competition was announced for the best sketch of the future panneau. Then the members of the group divided the various episodes among themselves and each set out to do his bit. When everybody had finished, the different drawings were all pasted together. The result was an interesting panneau indeed.

In the same way a panneau depicting Russian and foreign fairy-tale characters was produced. Now the young artists want to draw illustrations to Kornei Chukovsky's stories and verses for children.

THE SCULPTURAL STUDIO

The room of the sculpture circle where I found a dozen boys and girls in clay-smeared smocks busy at work was crowded with sculptural figures of all kinds. They were all over the place—in the cupboard and on the top of it, on shelves, on tables and even on the window-sills. Some of the figures were so well done that for a moment I thought they must be the work of the instructor.

But I was mistaken. Alexander Popov, who has spent 38 years of his life teaching modelling to children, confines himself to solely pointing out mistakes and giving ad-

vice to his pupils. He was hollowing out a clay dove made by Lena Kuznetsova in preparation for the kiln. But this, he assured me, was a purely technical operation though a little too delicate to entrust to the young "artist" who might spoil her dove in the process.

"So you have kilns here too?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes, three. Some of the best works done by our circle are baked and glazed. Of some plaster copies are made, but as a rule the kilning is done by professionals. We don't like to burden the children with work that is not purely creative."

In addition to practical studio work, attention is paid to developing the children's aesthetic taste and "artistic eye." In the summer-time the Pioneer House organizes trips to places famed for their scenic beauty. Members of the art circle have visited the ancient Russian town of Vladimir with its historical buildings, Lake Seliger and the Karelian Isthmus.

The children are taught to appreciate the beauty of man's labour; the collective farmers working in the fields, the powerful, dynamic figures of workers against the ruddy background of a steel furnace. All this I saw in their drawing albums.

Professional artists pay regular visits to the Pioneer House to examine and appraise the work of the juvenile artists. The children in their turn visit the artists' studios and then the roles are reversed. No matter how well-known the artist is, if the children don't like his pictures they will not hesitate to say so.

"Have any of your former pupils become artists?" I asked Alexander Popov.

"More than two hundred since the studio was first opened twenty years ago. Some of them have made a name for themselves."

Do you think it is easy
to play an accordion?



the "Little Humpback Horse"
panneau.





Let us see the new film.



Who is to be the new Ulanova?



Hockey can be also played
on a table.

LITERARY SECTION

This is what usually happens. Some shy youngster who has heard that the Pioneer House has its own writers, poets, and critics, turns up one day at the literary circle with a notebook in his pocket full of verses he has never dared to show anyone.

A week or two goes by and there comes a day when the shy youth gets up and reads his verses to the other members of the circle. The verses are thereupon discussed. The poet has to listen to some extremely frank and unbiased criticism. Moreover, the critics are apt to pay much attention to details.

One of them, for example, declares that the verses are not bad on the whole except for one detail that spoils everything. The poet writes that he drew lines on the wet pavement with chalk. How can you chalk lines on a wet pavement?

This is too much for the author. Boiling with indignation he gets up and offers to take the class outside at once to prove to them that you *can* chalk lines on wet pavements. Besides, haven't they ever heard of poetic license?

Gone is the shy, timid youth; in his place is a budding artist up in arms in defence of his Muse. A little more time passes and the boy, having participated in many a passionate literary dispute, brings a longer poem or perhaps a short story to be judged by his fellow members. After a few discussions and some alterations his work may be published in the circle's magazine. Verses by members of the circle often appear in the *Pionerskaya Pravda* (Pioneer newspaper) or the *Pioneer*,



No peace from those photographers!

Kostyor (Bonfire) and other children's magazines.

I glanced through a file of the magazine *Zeleny Shum* (Murmuring Forest), organ of the literary group. In one of the first issues, put out as far back as 1938, I saw a story about Lomonosov by Yuri Trifonov, a seventh-form pupil. Yuri relates how after receiving a low mark "for Lomonosov" he had invented a time machine which transported him back to the 18th century enabling him to get the story of Lomonosov's life straight from the scientist himself.

Today Yuri Trifonov is a well-known author. One of the treasured possessions of the Pioneer House literary circle is an autographed copy of his novel *The Students*. The youngsters are also very proud of the fact that eight members of the Soviet Writers' Union were once members of the same circle.

Celebrated authors like Samuel Marshak, Konstantin Paustovsky and Lev Kassil often visit the Pioneer House to give advice to the young members of the literary circle and read them their latest works.

FOOTLIGHTS

A rehearsal of the fairy-tale *At the Pike's Bidding* was in progress when I looked in on the House's dramatic circle.

As I watched the lively and entertaining performance I could not help noticing that some of the episodes in the tale were different from the usual version. I asked for the script and in comparing it with what was being performed on the stage I found that many of the characters did not figure in the script at all.

"Look here," I said to my neighbour, a girl of about 14. "This is sheer improvisation!"

"We don't mind that," she replied. "Evgenia Vasilyevna Galkina says we must develop our creative imagination."

I soon found myself carried away by the performance. I was especially impressed by the acting of Lyonya Nechayev, a lad of about 16 with a remarkably expressive face. He played the part of the jolly, simple-hearted village lad Erema who outwits all the tsar's wise men. It was altogether a charming performance bubbling with youthful spirits and fun, for though they played the part of grown-ups the children remained essentially themselves.

I asked the leader of the drama circle, Evgenia Galkina, what she thought was the chief element in educating future actors.

"The team spirit," she replied. "A theatrical troupe is primarily a group of people working together. I try to make the children think of themselves not so much as actors exhibiting their skill before the footlights, but as members of a group each of whom is responsible for all. We do not divide our members into the gifted, less gifted and mediocre. A member who plays the leading part in one play may have a very minor part in the next. Sometimes we try giving a leading role to an altogether "green" youngster, one

who is still afraid of the footlights. The performance as a whole might suffer, but it is more important for us to teach the children to be ready to sacrifice personal success for the benefit of a comrade than to please audiences."

CHESS FANS

"Can you tell me something interesting about your circle?" I asked the members of the Chess Section of the House.

Could they! My innocent question elicited such an eager response that I could barely manage to jot down all they told me.

It turned out that Yuri Averbakh, a grand-master of international renown, had been a member of their section when he was a boy. Three winners of international student contests and over two hundred other top-notch chess players had belonged to the Moscow Pioneer House chess circle. Didn't I know that the youngest claimant to the title of Chess Master in the U.S.S.R., Alexander Kuindzhi, was a member of the circle too? Added to everything else, when the British chess champion Robert Wade had visited the Pioneer House and given a demonstration play on thirty boards lasting seven hours, he had lost 20 out of 30 games and the remaining 10 were ties. And this is not the only case.

TRAVEL

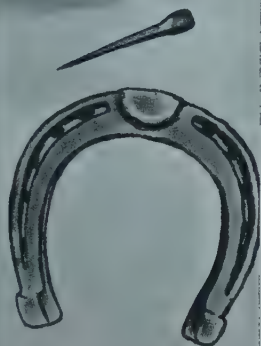
Every summer the members of the local history, geographical, meteorological and, of course, the tourist sections spend six weeks camping in the woods. They live in tents, prepare their own food and conduct observations each in his own particular branch of study. Those of the elder children who are stronger and better fit for a long journey go on trips to the Urals, the Caucasus and Uzbekistan. These are not simply pleasure excursions—the children make a thorough



Кузнец

— Эй, кузнец,
Молодец,
Захромал мой жеребец.
Ты подкуй его опять.
— Отчего не подковать!

Вот гвоздь,
Вот подкова.
Раз, два —
И готово!



Vladimir Konashevich's
illustrations to a collec-
tion of English nursery
rhymes (in Samuel Mar-
shak's translation)

Робин-Бобин

Робин-Бобин
Кое-как
Подкрепился
Натошак:

Съел телёнка утром рано,
Двух овечек и барана,
Съел корову целиком
И прилавок с мясником,
Сотню жаворонков в тесте
И коня с телегой вместе,
Пять церквей и колоколен, —
Да ещё и недоволен!





Illustration to Leo Tolstoy's tale *Three Bears*.

By Vladimir Lebedev



Illustrations to Yuri
Olesha's tale *Three Fat
Men*. By Vitali Gorayev



Evgeni Charushin's illustration to his book *Jokes*

study of the places visited and on their return deliver reports to the meetings of their respective circles. The bulk of expenses is paid by the Pioneer House from the three million roubles allotted it annually by the state.

OTHER SECTIONS IN BRIEF

Twenty years ago, when the Pioneer House was first organized only children who had excellent marks at school were allowed to join. Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, who attached great importance to extramural education of children disapproved of this approach, pointing out that all children without exception must be helped in the development of their natural gifts.

Today the Moscow Pioneer House has 180 different sections, such as musical, needlework, botany, dancing, and many technical sections.

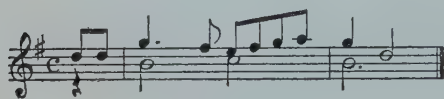
Before I left the House I looked in at the photography section and was so impressed by what I saw that I decided to do without the services of a professional news photographer and get the children to illustrate this article themselves.

As I was descending the staircase on my way out of the building my eye fell on the knobby banisters again and I could not help thinking that the builders needn't have gone to the trouble of putting them there. After all who would care to slide down the banisters here?



Sergei BOGOMAZOV

Juvenile Radio Programmes



This is the signature tune of Radio Moscow. Its melody heralds the beginning of another day. . . .

While the old still recall the time when a monotonous silence pervaded the homes, the youngsters, especially the children, simply cannot imagine life without radio.

REVEILLE FOR PIONEERS

Lenin, foreseeing the future of broadcasting, described it as the "newspaper without paper." Well, Soviet children have this paperless "newspaper" in the shape of their special radio feature known as "Reveille for Pioneers" which has been broadcast every morning for the past twenty-five years. Its original listeners are now grown up people and today their children listen to the paperless "newspaper." It tells them about the things taking place at home and abroad, about everyday school life and about the creative efforts of the youngsters all over the Soviet Union.

One broadcast, for example, told the story of the school pupils in the far away village of Nizhni Cherek in the North Caucasus who with their own hands dammed a mountain stream and built a small hydro-electric station. This was quite an undertaking, and you can imagine the excitement of the boy and girl builders on the great day

when the dynamo was switched on and electric lamps lighted the school and homes of the collective farmers for the first time!

Schoolboys and girls in Beryozovka, a village in the Ukraine, decided to compile the history of their village. They collected the legends transmitted from generation to generation, wrote down the stories of men who left their native village to fight against the Hitler invaders, and photographed one of the last remaining primitive huts of pre-Revolutionary times and one of the new collective-farm cottages. The result was a living and truthful document. The children display keen interest in broadcasts that lend wings to their own initiative.

"Reveille for Pioneers," which is broadcast six times a week, is but one of the series of juvenile programmes, each of which has its own form, its own tradition and range of subjects.

TALKING HEART TO HEART

The good teacher always talks with the boy or girl entrusted to his or her care as an equal, friendly, and frankly. And one of the most popular of our programmes for juvenile listeners is the series "Talking Heart to Heart."

How is it presented?

Boys and girls gather in the school hall or in the Pioneer House where they meet a well-known writer, journalist, teacher or some other personality whom they hold in esteem. The youngsters share their thoughts and doubts with the visitor and shower him with questions. The whole thing is recorded and, without any "pruning," is put on the air.

For instance, senior pupils in Leningrad—16-17-year olds—devoted an evening to an interesting talk on love and friendship. Freely, frankly and with feeling they expressed themselves about love and about true friendship. One of the girls spoke about jealousy—could it be reconciled with genuinely true love? Another, looking ahead to the future, asked if jealousy would persist under communism?

In Moscow the popular children's writer Lev Kassil had a talk with juvenile readers on the subject of taste. His audience gave serious thought to what they understood by really good taste. He was bombarded with questions and there was a lively discussion,

These youngsters rehearsed a song about a fir-tree for a long time in their kindergarten. At last the day came when, together with their teacher, they visited the radio studio. Soon young radio listeners will hear them sing, and what is most important, their very own mammas and daddies, grandpas and grandmas will hear them too.



much laughter, lots of fun and witty observations.

Then, when these talks are broadcast, many more children join in the debates which are both earnest and gay.

LITERARY POST-BAG

Literature is a subject that always excites the interest of young people. The mail brings letters packed with questions—some profound and serious, others bordering on the naive:

What is the feature of Turgenev's language?

What should one read about Pushkin?

How can one become a poet?

I am greatly interested in the biography of Lu Hsun.

What did Shakespeare want to express in *Hamlet*?

Tell us about the life and work of Rabelais?

What is meant by Impressionism?

The job of satisfying juvenile interest in literature is the function of the "Literary Post-Bag" programme which is broadcast once a week. In the main it follows the literature programme for the schools and this makes it exceedingly helpful. The tenth form, for example, studies Mayakovsky's poetry, and the pupils, naturally, display interest in the many facets of his work.

Natasha Svetlova wants to know if Mayakovsky can be regarded as a lyrical poet.

"Some of my school friends," she writes, "say that he was a tribune of the Revolution, an agitator, but not a lyric."

In reply the pupils are given a definition of the lyric, its essence, and the question of whether publicistic poetry is compatible with lyrical verse is discussed, with, of course, illustrations from Mayakovsky's work.

"Literary Post-Bag," is conceived as an aid to school pupils, as a means of broadening the field of their knowledge. Questions that are not of general interest are answered by post.

CATERING TO JUVENILE SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS

In the Soviet Union juvenile sportsmen are legion. They have their own societies, stadiums, swimming pools, and each week the radio transmits their special "Ready, Steady, Go" programme, which has been running without a break for the past ten years.

Sportsmen from other countries often take part in this programme—the youngsters are eager to know about all the developments in sport abroad.

This year the producers of "Ready, Steady, Go" have arranged a number of international chess competitions for teenagers. Reports of the first moves made by juvenile competitors in Moscow, Peking, Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw have already been flashed over the wires.



The famous Soviet actor Rostislav Plyatt and one of his tiny radio-auditors met unexpectedly at the radio studio. In order to conduct their conversation "on an equal footing" the little girl had to climb up on to the table.

From the "Then and Now" feature in this programme listeners learn that in 1913 in all of Russia there were only a little more than 100 football teams, whereas now there are 100,000. And here is another interesting fact. Forty-five years ago Pavel Bychkov of Moscow won the country ski championship. Pavel had the "misfortune" to be a janitor and his success horrified the reactionary élite. It is dreadful, they said, that a "janitor" should be champion of Russia. Today when they listen to these flashbacks the Soviet children marvel that things like that could have happened.

YOUNG MICHURINITES

Wise people say that a man is not a man unless he has planted at least one tree in his lifetime.

The "Young Michurinities," a popular science programme, inculcates love for flowers, trees, plants, and all things that grow in garden, field, and forest. Scientist and layman speak to the children on this programme, telling them about Nature, her secrets and her wonders.

Schoolchildren, too, come to the microphone to talk about the things they do in this line and to pass on their experience to others.

Budding landscape gardeners—pupils in School No. 80 in Stalingrad—related how they turned a strip of ground that had been torn and lacerated by shells and mortar bombs during the historic battle for the Volga stronghold into a pleasant and peaceful garden where leaves rustle and flowers bloom. Their effort so delighted them that they composed a song about it, sang it at the microphone and the radio waves transmitted it to the farthestmost parts of the country.

In the vicinity of Narofominsk, a town not far from Moscow, there is an old summer villa. It was owned by friends of Chekhov, and the writer visited it in the summer of 1903. The villa was set in the midst of cherry-trees, and it was here that the famous writer wrote some of the scenes for *The Cherry Orchard*. Later, it so happened that the orchard was destroyed. The Narofominsk school-children decided: Chekhov's cherry orchard must blossom again!

Last autumn they planted the first saplings and now they are looking forward to the day when the old villa will again be surrounded by the snow-white cherry blossoms.

THE PERSONALITIES CLUB

Books are excellent things. But not even the best books can take the place of meetings and talks with people—men and women renowned for their exploits. And how useful it is to remember that the exploit can be in the small as well as in the big, on the field of battle and in the quiet of the laboratory.

Actually one of the most interesting broadcasts in this programme was recorded in a laboratory where the children met Professor Negovsky and saw a real wonder. Before their eyes a dog, whose heart had ceased beating, was restored to life.

The questions with which they showered the professor, and his answers, made a lively and interesting broadcast.

What could be more interesting than a chat with the characters in your favourite book?

Among the personalities who have visited the club are Zhora Arutunyan and Valya Borts—characters in Alexander Fadeyev's book *The Young Guard*. The talk was, literally, a continuation of the pages of the book, the guests talked not only about the underground struggle waged by the young people of Krasnodon against the Hitler invaders, but also about the present-day life and work of the members of the Young Guard organization who survived.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Children are insatiably curious. The word "why" is one of the first that falls from the child's lips. As he grows up his interests widen. So it is not at all surprising that Radio Moscow's response to the never-ending stream of "whys" was the "Questions and Answers" programme.

Twice monthly scientists, inventors, explorers, sports champions, and others come to the microphone to answer teasers like these:

"What is lethargy?"

"How and when did everything that surrounds us come into existence?"

"How did they shoot the film *Secret of Two Oceans*?"

"What food should I give to my guinea-pig?"

"What is the purpose of a radio beacon?"

Certainly the producers of "Questions and Answers" have plenty to do.

In October last their daily post-bag swelled to bulging point. You will

easily guess why. Of course, it was the launching of the first Sputnik.

"What is inside it, that's the thing that puzzles me," wrote Volodya Naumov from the Crimea. From two second-form pupils (eight-year olds) came the urgent query:

"What keeps the Sputnik up, why doesn't it fall to earth?"

Naturally, the Sputnik broadcasts by scientists had terrific success.

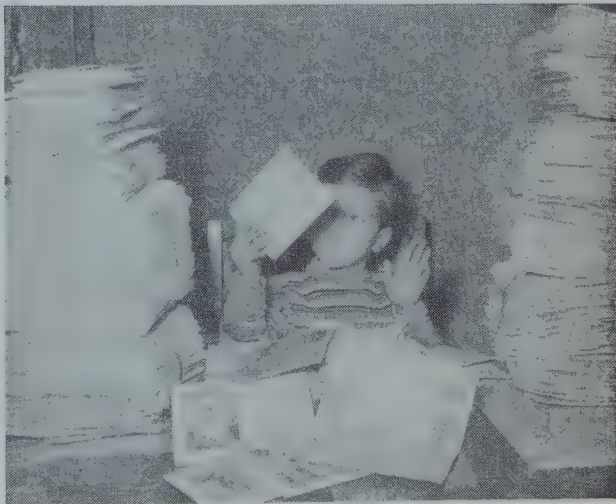
Yes, that is all very interesting and useful, the reader may say, but so far you have told us mainly about general knowledge and educational programmes, what about the art of the theatre, the wonderful sphere of music, and what about lighter programmes, programmes with laughter, fun and jokes? Do you have features like that?

Certainly.

THE UNSEEN THEATRE

Radio is the world's largest theatre. The cream of world dramaturgy is acted on its unseen stage. It relays plays direct from the theatre and, in addition, has its own specially written programmes.

Let's peep into the studio. What an array of queer gadgets for sound effects in this "world of sound" opens before our eyes.



The local mail of the department that caters to youngsters of pre-school age.

They are recording a programme. A clear boyish voice, urging his comrades to combat bad behaviour, to help the families of men called to the colours. Yes, you are right, this is Timur, the hero of Arkadi Gaidar's book, the favourite of Soviet children. We hear his passionate intonation. But where is he? Instead of a boy we see a small, frail woman with big and lively eyes. She goes up to the microphone and again we hear the boyish voice.

Acting the role of Timur is People's Artiste of the R.S.F.S.R. Valentina Sperantova—her friends call her the "best boy on the Soviet stage."

But she no longer plays the boy roles on the stage (age is age); in the radio studio, however, unseen by listeners, her wonderful voice rings out with all the freshness of youth.

The masters of the Soviet theatre give of their best in the radio programmes for children.

The programmes bring us Pushkin and Gogol, Tolstoy and Turgenev, Swift and Dickens, Cervantes and Andersen, Daudet and Jules Verne, Chekhov and Gorky, Marshak and Gaidar.

Not all the theatres in the country have so many names on their billboards and so many plays on their stages as the unseen Radio Theatre.

THE RADIO WONDERS

Burattino, (adapted from Alexei Tolstoy's fairy-tale the *Golden Key*), is one of the most popular of children's broadcasts. Taking part in it in addition to the wooden boy Burattino is the carpenter Giuseppe, the old organ-grinder Papa Carlo, the fascinating talking Cricket, passers-by and, lastly, the kind Story-teller who does all the narration. How many actors take part in Burattino?

"Five or six, perhaps more," would be your guess. You are wrong. Only one, Nikolai Litvinov.

But how is it done? Ah, that's where broadcasting technique comes in. It is clear that Burattino, for example, who is made from a piece of wood, should speak in a special way, with a fairy-like voice.

Producer Rosa Ioffe has recorded Litvinov's voice, at slow motion. The record is then switched to normal speed and the voice becomes thin, sharp and shrill. But how does Litvinov sing the Papa Carlo and Burattino duet? This is done by "superimposure." First Burattino is recorded (we already know his voice because of its peculiar sound), then Litvinov, equipped with earphones, records Papa Carlo on the same record, this time in a different timbre. And so we get the fascinating duet by man and doll, sung by the same actor.

"Greetings to you, Timur!" "Hullo, Tom Sawyer!" "Happy voyage, Dick Sand!" "Give us your hand, David Copperfield!" "How're tricks, Old man Gavroche? ...

Many are the names that one can meet in the letters from children, which come from all parts of the country, but they are all addressed to one and the same person, Valentina Sperantova.



Even more interesting are the street scenes. All the passers-by are acted by the same Litvinov. Here the "superimposing" is repeated several times on the same record. Thus, radio technique helps the art of the actor.

But this, of course, is an exceptional and experimental case.

WHO LIKES TO LAUGH?

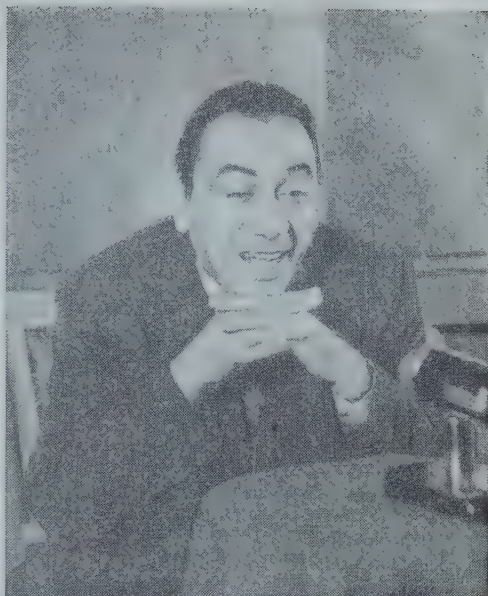
Who doesn't? Soviet youngsters at any rate do.

They don't half enjoy the radio-balls put on at the New Year and other festivals at which side-splitting jokes and epigrams are as plentiful as blackberries, and there are catchy tunes and prize-sharing. . . . Extremely popular is the radio show *Dimka-Nevidimka* the hero of which, the second-form pupil Dimka, puts his faith in the magic cap—*nevidimka*—which, in his imagination, helped him to enter unseen the teachers' room where he turned his bad marks into excellent.

And who can leave the radio set when out of the old copper-pitcher—which had lain at the bottom of the river for 3,000 years—there suddenly appears the grey-bearded oriental magician Khotabych, the character in Lazar Lagin's book, which has been adapted for broadcasting? Liberated by the Pioneer Volka, the old jinnee continues to work his astonishing wonders but, alas, in our everyday life he continually lands himself in scrapes.

The mysterious words: Kryble, Kreble, Booms! are borne to us over the air. This is none other than our old friend—Hans Andersen with his famous Talking Frog, the saucy Darning Needle, and the little Tin Soldier. . . . They tell story after story each funnier than the other. And where else other than over the radio can such a character as Darning Needle be played with such brilliance? After all in the theatre this role cannot be played even by the most talented actor.

It is interesting to follow the path of some of the plays from the microphone to the stage. At the moment *Dimka-Nevidimka* is being played at the Central Children's Theatre. The radio play *The Three Fat Men* gave Vladimir Rubin the idea for his comic opera presently running at the Saratov Opera House.



This picture shows Nikolai Litvinov conducting an animated dialogue between Papa Carlo and Burattino.

"Ah, you tiny wooden creature with tiny little thoughts," says Papa Carlo with a good-natured rebuke.

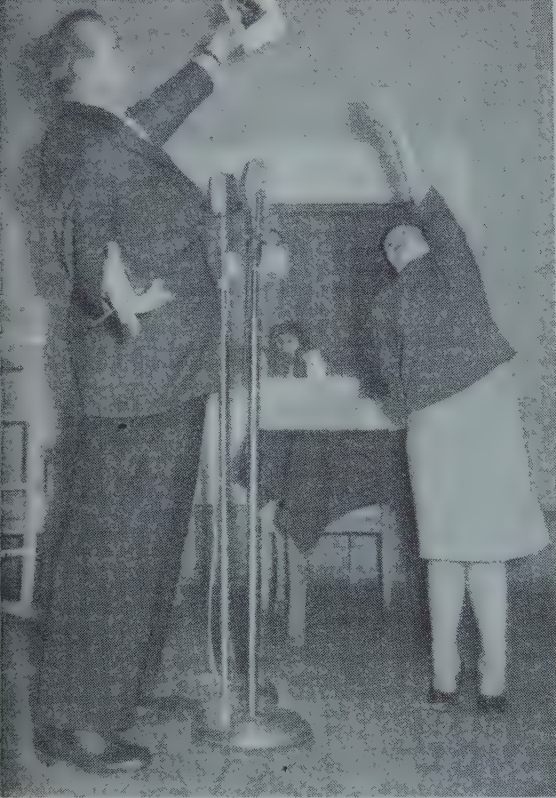
What does Burattino say in return? He'll begin justifying himself in a moment. But Litvinov is Burattino as well.

These examples could be multiplied. More and more the radio is becoming a laboratory giving birth to new ideas, new searchings, and new experiments.

"MUSIC IS IN MY HEART"

These words spoken by Glinka—creator of *Ivan Susanin*—while still a boy, could with every justification be repeated by the thousands and tens of thousands who listen every week to "Music Box," the request programme for young music enthusiasts.

"Dear Music Box," write two school-girls from the Krasnodar territory, "please



At the rehearsal. An interesting letter has arrived for "Riddle-me-Ree", but Grandpa (Actor Alexander Khanov) does not turn it over at once to his little granddaughter Galochka (Actress Galina Ivanova). One might be inclined to think that such an episode could be simply presented right there before the microphone. But no! The actors have to "act" even in the radio studio. They act and organize mis-*en-scènes* exactly as if they were performing before an overcrowded auditorium.

play for us the Dance of the Cygnets from *Swan Lake*. Chaikovsky is our favourite composer."

"I cannot tell you how much I love music," writes sixteen-year-old Vera Pekhtereva from far away Petrozavodsk.

"Everything begins with music: happiness, sorrow, and love," is the philosophical thought contained in a letter from Gurgen Arutunyan, technical school student in Yerevan.

"One can't live without music!" exclaimed Lida Bezrukova, a schoolgirl.

"When you listen to good music," writes Lyudmila Smirnova, a ten-form pupil, "you feel light-hearted and you want to live for others, and seek happiness for all."

But it is not enough to like music, one must be able to understand it. And this function is performed by the "Children's Music Club" programme. It acquaints the children with such concepts as melody, movements, major and minor, etc.

For the purpose of holding the attention of listeners this programme makes wide use of poetical literature. For example in the talk on melody, which without words expresses the feelings and moods of people, the producers included an excerpt from Chekhov's story *The Steppe*.

"... Suddenly the sound of song, sung softly, was heard. A woman was singing nearby, but where exactly, and in what direction, it was difficult to say. . . Yegorushka looked around but couldn't make out where the strange song came from. . . He began to think that the grass was singing. . ."

Then there are the entertaining guessing concerts "Which Country?" This is a musical programme in which lyrical stories about different lands are interwoven with their national music. In this series we might single out the "Musical Tour of Indonesia" and the concert devoted to Japan.

The children react in the most lively manner to these broadcasts, they not only guess the country from which the music comes (the producers deliberately refrain from mentioning the name of the country), in their letters they themselves write additional information about these countries.

And so on the wings of music the children make fascinating tours round the world.

And now a word or two about the toddlers, about those who as yet do not go to school, who only recently learned to dress themselves and for whom the ABC is still a deep secret.

They are great radio fans, and listen with delight to such broadcasts as "Story After Story" and "Your Favourite Book." They love the radio plays featuring *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Puss in Boots*, *Snow Maiden* and *Tom Thumb*—the favourites of every child.

In the broadcasts for toddlers it is most important to find the right approach, to steer clear of the false and the dandling and to help the child, while playing, to learn about the world.

"RIDDLE-ME-REE"

The words "Riddle-me-Ree" came over the air for the first time in the spring of 1944, when the war was still raging. The characters in this programme—the boy Borya, the girl Galochka, and their grandfather—come to the microphone once a month to present riddles for the listeners.

The riddles broaden the minds of the small children and arouse their interest in the things around them. It is yet another educational feature for only those who are not naughty and who listen to their elders are allowed to take part in this radio game. And how many solemn promises and candid admissions there are in the letters from the young listeners! "I have been naughty, but I promise to be good. . . ." "On my word of honour I will stop quarrelling, please let me join in." "I won't break Mother's cups any more."

Nothing could be more touching than these tiny pages in childish scrawl! "This is my first letter," writes a youngster. Some of them share the anxieties that are torturing them: "Mamma said that you are a grown woman," writes the six-year-old Leningrad lass to Yulia Yulskaia who plays the role of Borya—"but I don't believe her, I know that you are a real boy."

An entire exhibition could be arranged, with the presents which pour into "Riddle-me-Ree" from the children.

The morning post is being opened and all at once a fragrance fills the producer's room. . . . In reply to a riddle about a flower-bed some youngsters have sent flowers in envelopes.

After the riddle "the useful sisters" (about buttons) so many of the envelopes contained buttons that the producers were in a quandary what to do with them.

"The Magic Taxi."

And now, dear reader, here is a riddle for you:

What do you think, how many letters has "Riddle-me-Ree" received during the 14 years it has been on the air?

The answer: over half a million.

"THE MAGIC TAXI"

Is there such a thing in the world as a magic taxi?

Hardly,—would be the reply of those who have never heard the programme for children known as "The Magic Taxi."

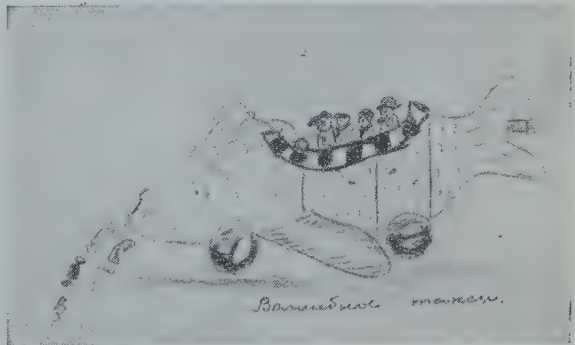
But the youngsters know that it exists. It appears on the air at holiday time and it takes them wherever they want to go. And mostly, of course, to Fairyland. . . . It seats as many passengers as you please. Please, step in! There is room for all except. . . you know who.

And let it be said that after every mile the magic speedometer throws out sweets of every description for the little ones.

Incredible, you will say! Well, here is Slava Yeroshkin, a tiny Moscovite who has no doubts whatever about it. This is how he pictures the Magic Taxi.

"The Magic Taxi" is a new programme, a new kind of children's review combining scenes and sketches from the most popular radio programmes.

Six times a day the children listen to Radio Moscow. Children's broadcasting takes up approximately three hours 40 minutes every day. Almost 1,340 hours a year, that



is, 55 whole days. Subjects and presentation, while highly varied, have a common aim: to help the family and the school in giving an all-round humanist education to juvenile listeners.

If you were to ask at any Moscow post office which address receives the most children's letters you would get the immediate reply: Radio Moscow.

And behind every letter is a living person, a young citizen of a vast country.

Broadcasting accompanies the Soviet child throughout his life. Children guess the answers to riddles and become friendly with the bears and rabbits of the fairy-tales. Radio helps the schoolchildren to study better and

opens a window for them to the great and wonderful world.

And when, upon taking farewell of school, the question confronts them: what shall I be, what path shall I take in life? The radio comes to their aid, tells them about the wonderful opportunities awaiting them for labour and creation.

Radio is a source of knowledge, delightful companion, and reliable friend and counsellor. That is why every day millions of Soviet children impatiently await the minute when the voice of the announcer pronounces the well-known words:

"Attention! We are beginning our broadcast for children."



Gifts to Radio Moscow made by the children themselves.

Our Audiences

Soviet Literature approached Anatoli Efros, producer, with the request to tell our readers his impressions of the [young theatre-lovers who frequent the Moscow Central Children's Theatre. Efros has recently staged the following productions there: Boris Godunov by Alexander Pushkin; Good Luck! and In Search of Happiness by Victor Rozov; An Alien Role by Sergei Mikhalkov and The Tale of a Tale by Avenir Zak and Isai Kuznetsov. This is what he said.

We were celebrating Marshak's birthday at the theatre. The audience consisted of seven-year-olds and younger. These little mischief-makers, so troublesome at home, were now sitting as quiet as mice. Greetings over, they were shown *The Tale of a Goat* and *A Little House Stood on a Hill*—two Russian folk-tales versified by Marshak. These plays have been on our stage for years but each new run brings packed houses.

There are other theatres carrying children's plays in their repertoire. The Moscow Art Theatre, for instance, stages *The Blue Bird* by Maeterlinck, a first play for many of us. However, the audience at the Art Theatre differs greatly from ours. The former is attended by children accompanied by their mothers and fathers. To our theatre, on the other hand, they come by whole classes; a single school-mistress may bring as many as thirty children along with her.

A glance into the hall is sure to bring a smile to your face: what astonishing poses the little onlookers assume as they gaze entranced at the stage! One youngster has climbed on to his seat to see the better, another is standing erect.

Oh, horrors! The little goat is approaching the spot where, behind a stump, the wolf is lying in wait for it. A thousand excited

voices begin shouting advice at the goat. One of the spectators, self-command gone to the winds, rushes to the stage—children are never satisfied with merely observing; they must be in the thick of the action.

Our theatre has staged Andersen's *The Snow Queen* (dramatized by Evgeni Schwartz). It is attended by children a bit older than the ones who enjoyed Marshak's *Fairy-Tales*, but just as temperamental and attentive. Take the following incident: the little girl, Gerda, is about to cross the line on the staircase, behind which (but Gerda is unaware of this) the wicked king's guards are waiting to grab her and carry her off. The uproar in the house at this moment can surely be heard in the street.

But Gerda does cross the line! The house utters a single scream which, as if by command, is followed by deep silence—what is going to happen now and who will gain the victory?

Long afterwards, safe at home, the kiddies will talk of the day's experiences and, you may be sure, will send in their comments to us. "I liked the little goat," they will write, "because it was so kind." And the second line will run, "The wolf was sly and wicked and that is why I didn't like him."

The first time I read a note of this kind I recalled one of Tolstoy's notes in his diary. It is the aim of art, first and foremost, to teach people to discriminate between good and evil, he claims. I wish and hope that it is our theatre that offers the first lessons in this vital and complicated field of knowledge.

Today's matinée will be attended by 12-13-year-old schoolchildren. Before the beginning and during the intermissions they will rush about in the lobby, exactly as they do at school during recess. There will be more boys or girls at the performance depending on what is being shown today. Boys love adventure plays, and when *The Mystery of the Black Lake* is on the bills, the hall is dark with their uniforms. At *The Snow Queen*, on the other hand, bright colours predominate—little girls like to wear their smartest dresses to the theatre.

Boys or girls of this age refuse pointblank to attend performances for little tots—they must have their own repertoire. Today they will be shown a new production, *Sombrero*,

written specially for our theatre by the children's writer and playwright Sergei Mikhalkov. This play deals with a group of pioneer-chums who, one summer at a country-cottage, decided to stage *The Three Musketeers*. One of the boys had managed to get hold of some real foils, whereupon they let him have the part of d'Artagnan, thus playing false with the boy to whom this role had already been promised. But the latter had his revenge. He gave himself out to be his own brother just arrived from Mexico. He had learned a few Mexican songs and dances which, with the stories he told them of this distant land, charmed his listeners to such an extent that they offered him the part of d'Artagnan. What was their surprise and shame when they learned of the trick that had been played on them!

An echo of the Moscow Youth Festival reverberates in this amusing play which shows such a wealth of sympathy and deference for a foreign land.

The 12-year-old spectator is the most difficult to please. Unlike the credulous kiddy and the polite grown-up, he has positively no patience for a dull performance. If the play does not amuse him he is not going to sit quietly. But when *Sombrero* is on, one can hear a pin drop. The attention of the audience is riveted to the stage. From time to time the sound of dropped coat-tickets is to be heard, but the children are so intent on what is going on that they don't notice it. They clap their hands boisterously in time to the songs. (Songs from this play are already being sung at school). When the curtain falls there is a rush to the stage to get a closer glimpse at the actors.

Mikhalkov has many more children's plays to his credit. All of them had been first produced at our theatre. Among them we find amusing comedies, *Sombrero* for example, and serious plays as well which usually deal with school life and offer a wealth of food for thought. During intermissions and at school later on, the theatre-goers discuss the problems brought up by the plays, while at home they insist that their parents adopt an orphan as they had seen done in Mikhalkov's *The Red Tie*.

The very same evening there is a play booked for adolescents—*In Search of Happiness*

by Victor Rozov. Senior pupils and university students, our favourite spectators, are tonight's guests. What inquisitive, sensitive, intelligent, grateful listeners! They are spontaneous in their perceptions as yet and they come to the theatre in search of answers to vital problems.

Rozov's first play, *Her Friends*, was presented at our theatre several years ago. It was followed by *A Page from Life* and, finally, by *Good Luck!*—a play which brought him wide and resounding fame. Rozov has the knack of expressing the complicated in simple and the serious in humorous manner. Like those about whom and for whom he writes, he hates moral discourses and dullness. He has a thorough understanding of contemporary youth, and this, naturally, wins him their hearts.

In his new play, *In Search of Happiness*, one of the main characters rises against the vulgarity and narrow-mindedness that crept into his own family. Deeply hurt and enraged by the vile heartlessness of his sister-in-law, he grabs a sabre which is hanging on a wall (a present to his father at the front) and begins slashing away at the fancy furniture with which she is stuffing up the apartment. I heard one of the young onlookers say to his neighbour: "I'll have to buy a sabre myself, I believe!"

Rozov's plays are the connecting link between our theatre and the theatre for adults. Adults drop in to see *Good Luck!* in the hope of deriving something useful for themselves.

One of the central ideas of the play is the theme of the honest and dishonest ways in life. The main character decides to go on the straight and narrow. After torturous uncertainty he decides to do without patronage of any kind in entering the university. In this connection the following incident told me by an acquaintance comes to my mind: At a family council the problem of how to get their son into college was being discussed (an exact analogy to Rozov's play). They were at it for a long time, while the son sat in a corner without uttering a word. But suddenly he spoke out. "Mother," he said, "I would like to know how many times you will have to see *Good Luck!* for it to have any effect." And he left the room with a slam of the door. . . .

You may say that a son should not be rude to his mother and that it is wrong to spoil furniture. Quite true, of course! But it

is so hard for a boy of 16 or 17, when his most sacred precepts are violated by people whom he holds dear, to observe the rules of propriety!

It is a favourite pastime with me, when plays for adolescents are being shown, to observe the house. Children and grown-ups sit side by side but their reactions to what they see are entirely different.

On the stage a mother is bidding farewell to her son who is striking out on his own. The young people in the hall gaze at the son and share his cheer. The older people gaze at the mother and weep for sorrow. . . .

I love my theatre.

I love it for the diversity of its repertoire: alongside serious productions like *Boris Godunov*, fairy-tales and comedies are selected for presentation. I doubt whether any theatre for grown-ups can boast of such variety.

I love my theatre for its multifarious audiences, for the versatile atmosphere of the morning and evening performances.

I love my theatre for the festivity which accompanies all its presentations. Children, more so than adults, regard theatre-day a holiday and bring this mood with them to the hall, from which it passes over to the stage.

In our foyer everyone talks loudly, moves rapidly, laughs at the top of his voice and argues ceaselessly. Before the beginning and between acts there is great excitement in the hall—from stalls to gallery and from gallery to stalls opinions are shouted. Whether the performance be amusing or dull, animation reigns, for is not youth attending!

The grown-up spectator following the central thread of the plot is often uninterested in the "sidelights." The child, on the other hand, misses no detail. He may not be as good



Children watching the play.

a judge, but he is sure to know a falsehood when he sees it. Not only the essential does his sharp eye single out, but the incidental as well, and this is the driving force that urges the performers on to a more truthful portrayal and the producer—to greater perfection and polish.

At our theatre the saying goes: "Acting should be the same for children as for adults and even better." This is what we strive for, but at times with unequal success.

Art is called upon to carry good cheer to people, to cultivate in them humane and noble feelings, to help them gain a better understanding of life. Especially does this concern the Children's Theatre. For is there more fertile soil than the young minds we convey our conceptions, thoughts, and sentiments to? We try never to forget the responsibility we bear in this connection.

And if our theatre, one of 103 of its kind in the Soviet Union, is doing its bit in the upbringing of honest men and women, our work is not in vain.

Children's books in the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Union publishes literature for children in 73 languages of the peoples inhabiting the land. The demands of the young readers are constantly increasing.

In the period from 1918 to 1956 about 50,000 different books were put out in a total edition of 1,627 million copies.

Books for children are printed in all the Union republics in their national languages. The following are just a few figures on the publication of children's books in several republics:

During the period of its existence Detgiz has printed about 1,000 million books. Just during the decade from 1947 to 1956 it published 587 million copies, and in 1957—107 million.

The publishing house tries to satisfy the most diverse demands of the readers, who vary in age from pre-school to those in the upper forms.

The literature put out by Detgiz is of various genres, including tales, short stories, long narratives, poetry, novels, historical books, and science fiction in all fields of knowledge.

The books of Russian and foreign writers for class and extracurricular reading by the pupils occupy a most important place in the work of the publishing house. This literature includes the writings of Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenyev, Leo

taken firm place among the children's favourites.

Detgiz also publishes many books by writers of the various nationalities of the U.S.S.R.

Books by modern foreign writers published in 1957 include: Gianni Rodari—*Adventures of Cipollino*, Felix Salten—*Bambi*, Kao Yubao—*I Want to Study*, Hay Li—*Two Thousand Li Over River and Mountain*, Erwin Strittmatter—*Tinko*, Igor Newerly—*The Chap from the Salsk Steppes*, Zsuzsa Thury—*The Girl from France*, Aleksa Mikić—*The Sunny Coast*, Krishan Chandar—*The Uprooted Tree*, Irmgard Keun—*The Girl Whom Children Were Forbidden to Play With*, Karel Capek—*Tales*, Ture Eriksson—*The White Cape*, Rafael Sabatini—*Captain Blood. His Odyssey*; Miriam Maisson—*Mark Twain, Boy from Missouri*, Astrid Lindgren—*The Youngster and Karlsson Who Lives on the Roof*.

In 1955 Detgiz began putting out a 20-volume edition of the *Library of Adventures*, which includes the finest works of Soviet and foreign authors.

The demand for children's literature is growing at such a rapid pace that the Soviet government has suggested to some of the publishing houses for adults that they put out books for children as well. Furthermore, a new, specialized publishing house for children of the pre-school age has been organized. It is called *Detskyy Mir* (Children's World). This publishing house will put out all kinds of picture books, picture games, book-toys, children's calendars, table games, etc.

1946-1954

Republic	Number of different books	Total Edition
Armenian S.S.R.	449	2,614,000
Azerbaidjan S.S.R.	568	7,370,000
Latvian S.S.R.	637	8,965,000
Uzbek S.S.R.	412	12,343,000
Ukrainian S.S.R.	1,197	43,171,000

The greatest number of children's books come out in the Russian language, for they are read by children of all nationalities. The State Publishing House for Juvenile Literature (Detgiz), which puts out these books, was organized in 1933. Maxim Gorky was one of its founders.

Tolstoy, Nekrasov, Gorky, Shakespeare, Dickens, Hugo, Balzac, Dumas, Goethe, Heine, Mark Twain, the fairytales of Andersen and many others. All these books are illustrated by the finest artists of the country.

During the years of Soviet power many new works have appeared which have

CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS



Elena Korotayeva (Seven)
Self-Portrait



Serik Karaulov (Seven) *Throwing a Lasso*



Margarita Stieglitz (Twelve)
Winter Morning



Maya Tabaka (Sixteen)
Spring

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Nikolai Nosov, who was born in Kiev in 1908, began his working career at the age of 16. He worked as a lumberjack, and an odd-job man at a concrete plant and at a brick factory. In 1932 he graduated from the Moscow Institute of Cinematography and for a long time was an assistant producer and then producer in the cinema.

His first story, *Jesters*, appeared in print in 1938, in the journal for the little children, called *Murzilka*.

A book of his stories, entitled *Tuk-Tuk-Tuk*, came out in 1945. The year 1949 saw the publication of the book, *A Happy Family*, which was followed by *The Diary of Kolya Sinitsyn*, *Vitya Maleyev at School and at Home*, and *The Adventures of Dunno and His Friends*. The last two works of Nosov's appeared in our journal in 1952 and 1956.

Of late Nosov has been writing satirical articles on literary themes. In this field, too, he is very popular.

Agnia Barto, the daughter of a veterinary surgeon, was born in 1906 in Moscow.

Her first book of verse about children and for children, *The Chinese Boy Van Li*, which appeared in 1925, was followed by *Pioneers* (1925), *Brothers* (1927), *The Little Cry-Baby* and *The Dirty-Faced Girl* (1930), *Toys* (1936) and many others.

The Great Patriotic War introduced new themes in the work of Agnia Barto. Her books *My Native Street* (1942), *Here Comes a Pupil* (1944) and *Nikita* (1945) describe the trials borne by Soviet people during the war and the young patriots who took their fathers' places in factories and plants. Her poem *Zoenigorod* (one of Moscow's suburbs) shows the love with which the state takes care of war orphans in children's homes.

Satirical verse occupies an important place in Barto's work.

Anver Bikchentayev, Bashkirian writer, was born in Ufa in 1913. Graduated from a Teachers' Training School. Since 1931 has worked on local newspapers. His first book, *Red Poppies*, was published in 1944; in 1949, a collection of *Stories About the Russian Soldier*; in 1949, *Waves of Karandeli*; in 1950, *The Right to Immortality*, the story

of the feat of Alexander Matrosov, hero of the Patriotic War; in 1956, the novel, *The Swans Remain in the Urals*, and his story for children *The Big Orchestra*, which also came out in 1956.

Yuri Sotnik, the son of an artist, was born, in Vladikavkaz, the Northern Caucasus, in 1914. After finishing school he worked as a photographer and wrote for journals for children and the youth.

His first book, *The Archimedes of Vovka Grushin*, appeared in 1946. It was followed by a narrative, *About Our Affairs* (1947), and two volumes of stories called *An Unprecedented Bird* (1950), and *Trainers* (1956). His scenario *Our Street Team* (1955) served as the basis for a children's film.

Sotnik's stories are usually about the adventures of teen-agers.

Alexei Markov, the son of a farm labourer, was born in 1920 in the village of Niny, Stavropol territory. Graduated from a Teachers' Training School. In 1940-1941 he worked on the newspaper, *Daghestanskaya Pravda*, published in Makhachkala. During the Great Patriotic War he served in the Army.

Markov's first poems were printed in newspapers published at the front. In 1951 he graduated from the Gorky Literary Institute in Moscow. His poems, *Towers in the Sea* and *Mikhailo Lomonosov*, won him fame. In 1956 a volume of his verse entitled *A Wind That Blows in the Face* appeared in print.

Ruvim Fryerman was born in 1891 in the town of Mogilev, Byelorussia, where he spent his childhood and youth.

During the Civil War he fought in the ranks of the Red partisans against the Japanese interventionists in the Soviet Far East. The impressions made upon him then supplied rich material for many of his works.

Fryerman's first story, *Vaska-Gilyak*, was published in 1924. Then came his books *The Second Spring*, *Nikichen*, *The Spy*, *The Death of Yung Fa-Fu*, and others. *Wild Dog*

Dingo or A Story of First Love (1939) was especially popular with the reading public.

During the Great Patriotic War Fryerman joined the People's Volunteer Forces and contributed to the Army newspapers. In 1944 he wrote the story *A Feat on a Night in May* and a number of tales.

Among the publications that appeared after the war are his narrative *A Long Voyage* and *The Life and Unusual Adventures of Lieutenant-Captain Golovin, Explorer and Seafarer*, a book written jointly with Zaikin and based on authentic facts.

Sergei Mikhalkov was born in Moscow in 1913. Although he began to appear in print at an early age he found his real place in literature considerably later, when the secondary school and his work at a textile mill in Moscow and trips with geological expeditions were already a matter of history for him.

In 1935 Mikhalkov began to write for children. His first book, *Uncle Styopa*, which is replete with warm humour as it tells of that kindly, fearless person of unusual height, who is such a friend of the little folk, immediately became a favourite of the youngsters and won its author wide recognition.

During the war Mikhalkov was at the front as a war correspondent.

Following the termination of the war Mikhalkov engaged in another form of writing—fables on topical problems of the day. They soon became exceedingly popular.

But Mikhalkov's greatest and most loyal audience is the younger generation, for whom he has written many diverse, merry books.

L. Panteleyev was born in 1908 in St. Petersburg. His father died early and his mother, left with three children to look after, was forced to roam from town to town in search of a livelihood. In the years immediately following the October Revolution Panteleyev broke away from his family and became a homeless waif. Finally he came to a children's home. The young Soviet Republic helped the boy get on to his feet and receive an education.

His first stories appeared in print in 1925. His story, *The Republic Shkid*, which was published in 1927, tells how former waifs were brought up in children's homes and developed into honest Soviet people.

The thirties saw the publication of two new narratives, *The Portrait* and *The Watch*, which further develop the theme of *The Republic Shkid*.

His story, *The Letter*, published in 1930, about the feat of an ordinary cavalryman of Budyonny's army during the Civil War won wide recognition. It was the first of a series of new works by Panteleyev, "tales about feats," which still continue to be his favourite subjects.

During the Great Patriotic War Panteleyev remained in besieged Leningrad where he served with the engineering troops and wrote for Army newspapers. His observations of those years have found reflection in a number of stories. Especially popular with Soviet children are his autobiographical narrative, *Lyonka Panteleyev*, and his stories, *The First Deed* and *Word of Honour*. In them Panteleyev not only speaks of the beauty and romanticism of great deeds, but also about how one should live in order to become a "real man."

Yuri Korinets was born in Moscow in 1921. He graduated from an art school in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

At present Korinets is in his last year at the Gorky Literary Institute. His first books, *An Overheard Conversation* and *Who Lives in the Shed?*, were published in 1957 by the State Publishing House for Juvenile Literature.

Susanna Georgievskaya was born in Odessa in 1916. She began to work at the age of 16, finding employment first at a plant, then at a hospital, a library, and finally as an actress in a theatre. While working she also studied at the Foreign Languages Institute, from which she graduated in 1936.

Her first story, *Petrushka*, appeared in the children's journal *Chizh* (Siskin) in 1939. That marked the beginning of her writing for the journals of Leningrad and Moscow.

When the Great Patriotic War began she joined the Army as a volunteer and served first in the Northern Fleet and later in the Dnieper flotilla. She took part in the capture of Berlin.

Among the works published after the war are *Galya's Mama* (1947), *Granny's Sea* (1949), and *Adolescence* (1954).

Valentin Katayev was born in 1897 in Odessa in the family of a school-teacher. Among his shorter works of fiction are *Little Red Crosses*, *Kranz' Experience*, *Catacombs*, *Embezzlers*, *Father*, *Son of the Regiment*, and *I Am a Son of the Working People*. He wrote a novel *Time, Forward!* His plays include *Squaring the Circle*, *Vanguard* and *House of the Fathers*.

Outstanding in his writings is a cycle of novels based on autobiographical material. The first of these, *A White Sail Gleams*, was published in 1936. Thirteen years later he used the same group of characters, now grown-up, in *For Soviet Power. The Cottage in the Steppe* was published in No. 9, 1956 of our journal.

Vladimir Orlov, the son of a school-teacher, was born in Poltava in 1916.

After graduating from the Moscow Electrical Engineering Institute (1938) Orlov worked at the Communications Scientific-Research Institute. In 1940-1941 he served in the Army. In 1944 he received his degree of Candidate of Technical Sciences. Since 1945 he has been a member of the editorial board of the journal *Tekhnika Molodyozhi* (Engineering for the Youth).

Orlov began his literary work in 1942. His first book, *Striking Rays*, was published in 1943; *The Underground Danger* appeared in print in 1944. These were followed by *Tales of the Elusive* (1946), *The Inventor's Secret* (1946), and *A Bold Idea* (1951).

Possessing a style that is both interesting and comprehensible to children, the writer tells them the stories of great scientific discoveries, of the remarkable achievements of modern science, and of scientists who have devoted their lives to the noble cause of subduing nature for the benefit of all people.

Konstantin Paustovsky was born in Moscow in 1892, in the family of a railway worker. He studied in Kiev. Began to appear in print in 1925. His writings include the stories *Kara Bugaz* (1932), *Kolkhida* (1934), *The Black Sea* (1936), and *Story About Forests* (1948); the plays *Lieutenant Lermontov* (1941), and *Our Contemporary* (*Pushkin*) (1949). An autobiographical account, *Story About Life* was published in 1950. At present Paustovsky is working on the third part of this book.

Korneli Zelinsky, literary critic, was born in 1896 in Moscow. He received his education at Moscow University.

Korneli Zelinsky is the author of works on the literature of the Peoples of the U.S.S.R., on the Kazakh poet Dzhambul, the Abkhazian national poet Dmitri Gulia and others.

Zelinsky has recently published a series of works on Russian and Soviet literature, which include an article on Sergei Esenin, a book on Alexander Fadeyev and others.

Korneli Zelinsky is a senior research worker at the Gorky Institute of World Literature and a member of the editorial board of the magazine *Problems of Theory and History in Literature*.

Boris Galanov was born in 1914 in Odessa; graduated from the Institute of History, Philosophy and Literature in Moscow in 1939. He has written critical essays on Boris Polevoy and Samuel Marshak, as well as a number of articles on various problems of Soviet literature.

Children's writer Lev Kassil (born in 1905) began to appear in print in 1930. To his pen belong the novels *Conduit*, *Shvambrania*, *Cheremysh*, *Brother of a Hero*, *The Street of the Younger Brother*. His story *Early Dawn* about a young artist Kolya Dmitriev was published in No. 4, 1954, of our magazine.

EDITORIAL BOARD

D. Eremin, editor-in-chief
K. Chukovsky, K. Fedin, S. Kirsanov, Y. Metallov,
T. Moiseyenko, W. Wasilewska

JOURNAL PUBLISHED
IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, POLISH, AND SPANISH

Address: "Soviet Literature," 17 Kirov St. Moscow

9.

67

SOVIET LITERATURE

PLACE YOUR ORDERS WITH:

- U.S.S.R.—“Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga,” Moscow, 200.
- AUSTRALIA—Current Book Distributors, 40, Market Street, Sydney.
A. Keesing (Subscriptions), G.P.O. Box 4886, Sydney.
International Bookshop Pty. Ltd., 57 Little Bourne St., Melbourne C. 1, Vic.
The People's Bookshop, 205, Brunswick St., The Valley, Brisbane, QLD.
- BURMA—Kyaw Linn, N. 180, 51 Street, Rangoon.
People's Literature House, No. 546 Merchant Street, Rangoon.
Nan Chio Book Supplier, N. 178 Fraser St., P.O. Box 1327, Rangoon.
The People's Daily, 84th St., Letsaigan, Mandalay.
- CANADA—Progress Publishing Company, 924 King Street, West Toronto, Ontario.
- CEYLON—People's Publishing House, 91, Cotta Road, Colombo 8.
- EGYPT—Agency of Soviet magazines, 20 Adly Pasha St., Cairo.
- DENMARK—A/S Land og Folks Boghandel, Bredgade 37, Copenhagen.
Hovedbanegaardens, Aviskiosk, Reventlovsgade, Copenhagen.
- GREAT BRITAIN—Collet's Holdings Ltd., 44-45 Museum Street, London, W.C.1.
Central Books Ltd., 37 Grays Inn Road, London, W.C.1.
- INDIA—People's Publishing House Ltd., 5, Thandewallan State, M. M. Road, New Delhi-1.
P.P.H. Bookstall, Prarthana Samaj Tram Junction, 421, Sandhurst Road, Bombay 4.
New Century Book House, 199, Mount Road, Madras, 2.
Prabhath Book House, Cannonshed Road, Ernakulam.
People's Book House, Grand Hotel Bldgs. Frazer Road, Patna I.
National Book Agency, Ltd., 12, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta 12.
Visalaandhra Publishing House, Buckinghampet P. O. Vijayawada 2, Andhra State.
Society Publishers, 18 Baburam Seal Lane, Calcutta 12.
Kalpana Sahitya Mandir, 18, Baburam Seal Lane, Calcutta 12.
- INDONESIA—Badan Penerbit & Perusahaan Dagang Rakjat “N. V. Rakjat,” Pintu Besar 93, Jakarta-Kota.
Firma “Rada” Djalan Rintu Besar, Selatan 3A Jakarta-Kota.
Indian Publications Agency, 19, Pasar Besar, Sourabaya.
- JAPAN—“Nauka” Ltd., N. 2, Kanda zinbocho, 2-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo.
- NETHERLANDS—Uitgeverij “Pegasus,” Leidsestraat 25, Amsterdam.
- SWEDEN—A.B. Wennergren-Williams, Box 657, Stockholm.
C. E. Fritze's Kungl. Hovbokhandel, Fredsgatan 2, Stockholm.
Förlagsaktiebolaget Arbetarkultur, Kungsgatan 84, Stockholm.
- U.S.A.—Four Continent Book Corporation, 822, Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.
Imported Publications and Products, 4 West 16th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.S.R.

Subscribe to **SOVIET LITERATURE**

PUBLISHED MONTHLY IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, POLISH AND SPANISH

Nikolai Mikhailov describes his 20,000 kilometres journey by sea, air and land between the two Poles. Read "I Follow the Meridian" in "Soviet Literature" No. 5.

Fate brings together several very different people under one roof: the energetic Peeter Arro, the bossy, excessively vain Marl Poder, Trlinu, the hard-working housewife, and the gay-natured Vaike. You can read of their life together and how they worked on one collective farm in "Under One Roof," a novel by the Estonian writer Hans Leberecht, in "Soviet Literature" Nos. 5 and 6.

"Soviet Literature" No. 6 also contains an autobiographical tale "The Enchanted Desna" by the distinguished writer and film director Alexander Dovzhenko.

1918. A remote Siberian town which had arisen around an old penal settlement. Nature is stern here and people are cruel and churlish. Vadim Kozhevnikov's novel "Meeting the Dawn" to be published in "Soviet Literature" No. 7 tells how forty Communists lay the foundations of a fair human community in this corner of the Siberian forest.